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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report has been prepared for the first session of the Open-Ended Working Group of the Economic and Social Council established by Council resolution 1993/80 to undertake the general review called for by the Council in its decision 1993/214, with a view to updating, if necessary, Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), as well as introducing coherence in the rules governing the participation of non-governmental organizations in international conferences convened by the United Nations.

2. In its resolution 1993/80, the Council also requested the open-ended working group to include, in its review, an examination of the ways and means of improving practical arrangements for the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit of the United Nations Secretariat.

3. The present report incorporates the suggestions made by the representatives of member States during the organizational session of the Working Group on 17 February 1994.

I. THE ROLE OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

The emergence of civil society

4. The activity of non-state actors has today become an essential dimension of public life at all levels and in all parts of the world. Examples abound to show the dramatic rise in people's capacity to organize among themselves and in the influence exerted by social movements in virtually all areas of concern to communities, large and small.

5. Two major components in this process stand out - participation and globalization.

6. Participation covers many different aspects: political participation takes place through the election of leaders by citizens in regular, free and fair elections; economic participation is achieved through the ability to engage freely in economic activity, beginning with the right to work. Participation is also the ability to associate with fellow human beings to undertake tasks in and on behalf of the community in which one lives, to express and represent the needs of a community, and to engage in a dialogue with the governance to which this community relates - in other words to define and involve oneself in a social movement and in what has become generically described, in a growing body of contemporary literature, as "civil society".

7. The other dimension of this process is the globalization of life on Earth. With the revolution in communications and information technology and the profound transnationalization of the economy, events, issues and processes in one part of the world immediately reverberate across regions with a resulting transformation of the perceptions that communities everywhere form about the evolution of the world as a whole. In consequence, people around the world have

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mobilized in support of issues such as humanitarian relief, the promotion of women's rights and environmental preservation, and thousands of new organizations have been established to pursue these causes.

Non-governmental organizations in civil society

8. Although more and more studies use civil society as the broad framework within which the role of non-state actors can be analysed, there is no question that Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the media and the general public are more familiar with the phrase "non-governmental organizations". This is not necessarily because the reality they cover is less diverse or easier to describe. It is simply because the phrase has gained international currency, thanks in particular to its inscription in the Charter of the United Nations.

9. Although there is no universally accepted definition of what a non-governmental organization (NGO) is, there seem to be some basic characteristics that meet general agreement. An NGO is a non-profit entity whose members are citizens or associations of citizens of one or more countries and whose activities are determined by the collective will of its members in response to the needs of the members or of one or more communities with which the NGO cooperates.

10. The scope, form of organization, activities, funding and accountability of NGOs differ widely:

(a) An NGO may be organized locally, nationally, regionally or globally;

(b) Its officers may perform their duties towards the organization on a voluntary basis or for a remuneration;

(c) Funds may come from membership fees, private donations, other NGOs, local authorities, government or intergovernmental sources, businesses or returns from the NGO's sale of goods and services within the scope of the organization's mandate;

(d) Activities cover a wide range, including public awareness, education, direct support to communities and community organizing, technical assistance and counselling, policy analysis and advocacy, and research and evaluation;

(e) Thematically, NGOs cover the entire spectrum of social, economic and sustainable development issues, as well as many political concerns, such as peace and conflict resolution, disarmament, humanitarian relief and protection of human rights;

(f) NGOs are normally accountable to their members and sources of financial support. They may also be accountable to the communities with which they cooperate. They may be required by law or administrative regulations to provide reports to statutory government departments.

11. Although the term "NGO" is commonly used, many NGOs feel uncomfortable with it because it is a negative description of an institutional category, but also, and more significantly, because it can easily be misconstrued to mean "anti"

rather than "non" governmental. In fact, many other names have been and continue to be used, such as voluntary agencies (especially, but not exclusively, among organizations involved in humanitarian relief), private voluntary organizations (PVOs, used in particular in the United States of America), voluntary development organizations (as was chosen by one of the African networks of "NGOs", the African Forum of Voluntary Development Organizations), and citizens' organizations.

12. An examination of NGOs in the broader context of civil society helps to understand important changes in their roles and modes of operation. NGOs fall roughly into two categories. The first one is a category of organizations which by their objectives and methodology are concerned with supporting social movements and/or initiatives. The second category includes NGOs which have emerged from social movements and represent their institutionalized reality. The former category of NGOs emphasizes participation and empowerment and sees its role needing to be focused on capacity-building for greater self-reliance at the community level. The latter focuses on advocacy and networking as tools to promote changes in policies and governance.

The role of NGOs in economic, social and sustainable development

13. The importance of the non-governmental sector in development is today fully acknowledged by researchers, Goverrments and intergovernmental institutions. This can be seen, first and foremost, in the influence that NGO approaches to development have had on the development debate itself, in particular through the adoption of policies and strategies that emphasize the need to place people at the centre of development processes, the importance of participatory approaches, and the priorities that need to be given to poverty alleviation, social equity, environmental protection and regeneration, and cultural identity.

14. NGOs have often been pioneers in national and international processes in drawing the attention of policy makers and official development agencies to issues which have, in the last 20 years, become essential components of development strategies (e.g., the advancement of women and the integration of population concerns into development thinking and practice). In industrialized countries, it is the non-governmental sector that has consistently called donor Governments, through advocacy and public campaigning, to honour their commitments to internationally agreed aid targets. NGOs and NGO coalitions in donor countries have published reports on the performance of their countries' bilateral aid programmes. They have also been involved in broader issues of development finance, especially the external debt of developing countries.

15. In operational terms, NGOs are recognized for their capacity to work at the grass-roots level, directly with poor communities, through programmes that emphasize empowerment and self-reliance. NGOs are also recognized for their expertise in areas which have only recently been given prominence in national and international strategies, such as the protection of biodiversity and the need to develop socially appropriate and non-polluting technologies. NGOs are known to be capable of responding quickly to changing and dramatic circumstances, such as natural calamities and man-made disasters, and of taking risks to support vulnerable groups in situations of crisis.

16. NGOs are, of course, a very diverse institutional category with huge variations with respect to size, resources and impact:

> "A few development NGOs are very large, with staff and budgets rivalling or exceeding bilateral or United nations system agencies' development programmes. But the basic reliance on voluntary funding and small-scale grass-roots development projects keeps the vast majority of development NGOs quite small, and exerts pressure to do more with fewer resources" (JIU, 1993).

Yet, taken together, the non-governmental sector has grown into a force of major significance over the years, as is shown, in particular, by the statistics of financial transfers by and through NGOs, from developed to developing countries. The secretariat of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that the total contribution of developed-country NGOs to developing countries was $8.3 billion in 1992, or 13 per cent of all development assistance. In terms of net transfers, NGOs collectively constitute the second largest source of development assistance, second only to bilateral donors (Clark, 1991). Developed-country NGO programmes doubled in real size from 1975 to 1985 (by comparison, official development assistance (ODA) from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) rose by 39 per cent during the same period), and have continued to grow since then. An increasing volume of official funding is channelled through NGOs to developing countries, rising from 1.5 per cent of NGO income in 1970 to 35 per cent in 1988. Including allocations from bilateral programmes, DAC-country Governments now channel approximately 9 per cent (and a much higher percentage for some donor countries, e.g., 19.4 per cent for Switzerland, 11.1 per cent for the United States of America and 10.8 per cent for Canada) of their official development assistance through NGOs. DAC-government contributions to NGOs currently represent approximately 35 per cent of the total resources raised by the non-governmental sector in these countries, compared to 1.5 per cent in 1970 and 30.8 per cent in 1980. Annex IV presents a recapitulation, since 1970, of private grants by DAC-country NGOs involved in development cooperation, and annex V presents a recapitulation, since 1970, of DAC-country government contributions to NGOs.

17. In developing countries, the numbers of NGOs involved in development activities have increased spectacularly over the last decade. In some countries with a particularly vibrant civil society, there are several tens of thousands of NGOs and people's organizations. The World Bank estimates that registered NGOs in India handle $520 million per year, or 25 per cent of all external aid. While a majority of developing-country NGOs are small, some have reached a size in human and financial resources that enables them to play a major role nationally in sectors such as health, education and poverty alleviation. The 1993 Human Development Report estimated that the combined efforts of developed- and developing-country NGOs has probably now reached 250 million people in developing countries, two-and-a-half times as many as they did in the early 1980s and with a likelihood of considerable expansion in the years ahead.

18. Yet, the NGO sector also faces limitations and weaknesses, especially as regards coverage (in some countries, the sum total of NGO efforts does not exceed 5 per cent of a country's poor population) and capacity to provide access to productive assets, particularly land and credit. NGOs are also often at a

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disadvantage in areas such as coordination, both among themselves and with other entities such as national Governments and donor institutions. Many of their activities, undertaken at the grass-roots level, remain outside meso- and macro-level planning and may not, over time, provide sustainable improvements in the living conditions of the communities for whom they are intended. While often able to reach people in poor and remote areas where government services are weak or non-existent, NGOs are not always able to work with the lowest income groups who are often dispersed and difficult to form into groups for the purpose of project planning and implementation. NGO projects are difficult to replicate, often not or insufficiently evaluated, and in many cases economically or environmentally unsustainable.

19. Not unlike development paradigms and relations between developed and developing countries, the NGO sector has evolved significantly in the last decade or so. Most fundamentally, NGOs have moved gradually from relief and welfare to community development to sustainable systems development. These three "generations" of NGOs describe an evolution from the early emphasis on direct delivery of services to meet immediate needs to an increasingly stronger focus on local self-reliance through community empowerment, and then to the need to look, beyond the micro-level, at issues of sustainability and systemic change that can be dealt with only if NGOs inject their experience and expertise into the policies and strategies of governmental and intergovernmental agencies.

20. One of the most important implications of this evolution has been the transformation of the relationship between developed- and developing-country NGOs from dependence to a collaborative partnership based on equality, mutual accountability, openness to learning from each other and longer-term commitments to action. A series of important meetings, beginning with the seminal symposium organized by World Development and the Overseas Development Institute in London in 1987, have triggered a profound, albeit often slow, recognition of the full role played by developing-country NGOs as institutions engaged in strengthening civil society through involvement in advocacy among their constituencies and partners and improved dialogue and cooperation with official institutions. Perhaps the single most important dimension of this change process is the greater emphasis now being placed, through innovative financing schemes and new types of capacity-building programmes, on sustainability of action and impact. This implies, of course, a commitment to monitoring and evaluation, two areas in which the NGO community as a whole needs to invest more in future. Establishing new partnerships is also having an impact on developed-country NGOs. The latter are adapting to this new action agenda and division of labour by focusing more on information, networking, policy research and advocacy, as well as support for capacity-building of their developing-country partners.

A typology of NGOs

21. Many authors and institutions have proposed valuable typologies of NGOs involved in economic, social and sustainable development. The following represents a broad measure of agreement:

(a) Grass-roots organizations: they focus on self-help and community organizing and can be involved in a wide range of activities including employment and income generation, land use, savings and credit). They normally operate on a purely voluntary basis but may often go through a process of institutionalization and professionalization as the size of their activities grows;

(b) Operational and intermediary organizations which support grass-roots and other community-related organizations through funding, capacity-building and counselling. This category includes relief and welfare NGOs; popular development agencies (focused on supporting grass-roots, self-help activities); federations of NGOs supporting their members through information, institution-building services and legal advice, and public service contractors (NGOs funded by, and working closely with, developed-country and multilateral aid agencies and developing-country central and local governments);

(c) Advocacy NGOs and networks that are focused on constituency-building, policy research and advocacy around specific issues (e.g., gender, environment, human rights, aid, debt).

22. NGOs need to be classified not only in terms of their functions but also according to their geographical scope (local/subnational/national/regional/interregional/global); thematic/sectoral specialization (development, environment, relief, human rights, gender); constituency (membership organization, non-membership organization, formal or informal network, professional association, trade union); religious/secular character; and affiliation (no affiliation, member of (national/regional/international) federation and/or network).

23. As the number of NGOs has grown over the years, so has the diversity of organizational categories and subcategories. While all categories have become larger, it is undeniably in (a) national organizations (especially in developing countries) and (b) advocacy organizations (in all regions) that the expansion has been the most important. Traditional organizational patterns of affiliation, in particular, have been significantly modified through the relative decline in formal types of local-to-national and national-to-international affiliation.

24. Networks, which were the exception 20 years ago, have become a preferred form of association, especially for organizations that focus on the themes which have emerged in the last two decades (e.g., environment, gender and human rights). Networks tend to operate around specific objectives or campaigns. The quest for partnership and common thematic and policy interests have generated horizontal linkages across countries and regions which tend to replace the more vertical links that were the established norm when organizational identity was a primary concern for affiliation. They are usually formed for relatively short periods of time and bring together organizations that maintain their institutional identity while cooperating with other network members on the basis of a commonly defined objective or agenda. They operate as coalitions with a division of labour in which each participating organization uses its comparative advantage to the benefit of the entire network.

25. Another noticeable change is in the range of services that organizations now offer to their partners and members. As NGOs move upstream of their traditional involvement in community activities, they develop skills in areas

such as information and communication, research, policy analysis and advocacy, and generally make greater use of their knowledge of development issues and lessons from operational experience to influence the aid debate within their own countries and in regional and global intergovernmental forums.

NGOs and Governments

26. The growth of civil society and the expansion of the NGO sector that is involved in development would not have happened if there had not been a parallel increase in the recognition, by Governments, of the important role played by non-state actors. While it is clear that NGOs have received greater attention because of their ability to support development efforts in areas and with groups that Governments and intergovernmental institutions could not reach (notably with poor and marginalized communities at the grass-roots level), NGOs "have no desire to supplant or compete with the state in their development efforts; on the contrary, in both [developing and developed countries] most NGOs continue to interact heavily with Governments" (Drabek, 1987).

27. Analysing the organizational culture of NGOs, a recent study of industrialized-country voluntary organizations differentiated between, on the one hand, countries with a tradition of "corporatism", e.g., Scandinavia, where associations "commonly act as interlocutors between their members and government, participating actively in government decision-making and policy formation ... to develop a consensual approach to policy and governance", and, on the other hand, countries with a tradition of "pluralism" or "democratic pluralism", e.g., the United States, where "voluntarism [is] based on a rejection of government control and a resistance to consensus ... [and in which] voluntary associations help to ensure that no single interest or interest group will prevail over others on a given issue" (Smillie, 1993).

28. While this distinction bears some important consequences as regards the form and content of the relationship between the voluntary sector and the State, the figures quoted above in paragraph 16 attest that cooperation between developed-country NGOs and Governments in the field of development has been significantly strengthened. NGO access to government aid budgets has considerably widened in the last 10 to 15 years. Originally organized around co-financing schemes for NGO activities, cooperation has been extended to the bilateral budgets themselves, with NGOs executing, in partnership with a wide range of developing-country institutions (NGOs, of course, but also Governments, local authorities, academic institutions, etc.), programmes that have a strong focus on poverty alleviation, strengthening of the informal sector, environmental sustainability, gender equality, social and ethnic integration, and the like. NGOs are also a preferred partner in situations requiring emergency relief (food aid, humanitarian assistance, etc.). With an average of 9-10 per cent of total ODA being allocated to NGO-run programmes, bilateral donors are now transferring much greater amounts of resources through NGOs than through the whole United Nations system.

29. NGOs also have access to policy-making levels, e.g., through parliamentary hearings on development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace conflict and through meetings with ministers and senior civil servants. They are called upon for advice on emerging trends and crises. They have also been the most

organized "lobby" in the defence of aid budgets whenever these have been threatened with freezes or reductions in the face of budgetary stringency and changing political circumstances.

30. In developing countries, although problems and tensions continue to be a reality in some countries, the level of cooperation between Governments and NGOs has also risen significantly in the last decade. In addition to government departments and the non-governmental sector becoming naturally better acquainted with each other, both sides have a better understanding of their complementarity. This evolution has often been accelerated by the implementation of structural adjustment programmes in that reductions in public expenditure, especially in the social sector, have thrust additional - and mostly unplanned - responsibilities upon NGOs in key areas such as education and health. Examples of this evolution are found, for example, in the involvement of NGOs in social emergency funds established to mitigate the impact of adjustment measures on vulnerable groups.

31. The purposes and types of collaboration between NGOs and Governments are as varied as the Governments, the NGOs and the societies they serve (Smillie, 1993). As was noted in the 1993 Human Development Report,

> "[While developing-country] NGOs have complex relations with Governments, sometimes cooperating, sometimes in conflict - and often both simultaneously over different issues ... the key issue now is how best to promote the strengths and interests of both governments and NGOs. Governments, seeing NGOs as widening their activities, will want to monitor, or probably control, them more closely. But they will have to find ways of doing this without nullifying the benefits they bring ... . NGOs increasingly recognize that if they are not to be marginalized in national debates on the participatory approach to development, they have to engage more constructively with Governments" (UNDP, 1993, pp. 90 and 91).

The Human Development Report advocated interaction at three levels: central line ministries, for purposes of coordination and involvement of NGOs in planning; local government, through the establishment of forums that provide for interchange of ideas between local administration and NGOs, and national forums for policy dialogue, as has already been done in some countries, e.g., the Philippines with the establishment, in September 1992, of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, a consultative body on national follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), one third of whose membership comes from the country's NGOs and people's organizations.

32. While experiences vary greatly in this respect from one country to another, there is an unquestionable improvement, overall, in the level, quality, sustainability and practical value of government-NGO cooperation in developing countries. This is seen, inter alia, through improvements in the legislative and administrative frameworks under which NGOs operate at the country level, the strengthening of government machinery for cooperation with NGOs (especially at the sectoral and decentralized levels), the increasing frequency of consultative meetings which enable Governments and NGOs to engage in discussions on policy choices and sectoral and thematic planning, and the participation of NGOs in donor-recipient dialogues. If much remains to be done, such processes have

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already led to better understanding of the roles, comparative advantages and constraints of the various actors, and greater trust and operational complementarity between them.

Civil society and global governance: NGOs and the United Nations

33. As the foregoing sections of this chapter suggest, no presentation or discussion of the relationship between NGOs and the United Nations can or should take place without giving proper consideration to the theme of the relationship between global governance and civil society. Indeed, no study of this subject has been published without some analysis of the political significance of the presence, in the workings of the United Nations, of organizations that are, de facto, the closest approximation to direct popular participation in the intergovernmental machinery.

34. Many studies (e.g., Martens, 1992; Nerfin, 1987) take as their starting point the fact that, while the preamble of the Charter begins with "We, the peoples of the United Nations", decision-making in the United Nations is the exclusive prerogative of the executive branch of the State. The United Nations is not, and does not, include in its Charter provisions for the establishment of a world parliament.

35. Recognition of the existence and role of non-state actors was given by the founding members of the United Nations with the inclusion, in the Charter, of a specific article for the establishment of relations between NGOs and the world organization. Article 71 stipulates that:

> "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned."

36. This article, which was not included in the drafts of the Charter prepared by participants in the Dumbarton Oaks conference of August 1944, was added as a result of pressure brought to bear at the San Francisco conference by representatives of NGOs on the United States delegation (Martens, Tinker). Although limiting NGO participation to interventions on economic and social issues was less than the statutory consultation on political questions that NGOs had aimed for, it was nevertheless unprecedented in establishing formal relations between "interest groups" and an intergovernmental body (OECD, 1988).

37. The modalities for application of Article 71 were first defined in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 3 (II), which provided for NGOs to be placed in consultative status with the Council and to hold consultations with the Secretariat, and were elaborated further in Council resolution 288 B (X) of 27 February 1950 and, most recently, in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968. Chapter II of the present report reviews the implementation of this resolution.

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38. Whatever tensions may have existed on the subject of NGOs at the time when the Charter was drafted were compounded by the emergence, in the late 1940s, of the ideological confrontations of the cold war. For almost four decades, the international evolution of the non-governmental sector was dominated by rivalries between the super-Powers. While a number of international NGOs managed to maintain membership across political and ideological boundaries, many were obliged, in one way or another, to limit their activities to the geopolitical realities of that time, with obvious implications as regards the expansion of the non-governmental sector in developing countries. This was the context in which Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) was negotiated and adopted.

39. There is no doubt that the transformations of the international political climate that have taken place since the mid-1980s have profoundly modified this situation. All recent studies point to the unprecedented "window of opportunity" opened by the end of the cold war, the sweeping changes that have occurred in the governance and economic systems of many countries, and the ensuing recognition in all the world's regions of the need for Governments to establish more responsive and flexible relations with their country's civil society. They also emphasize the new problems with which the international community is faced, in particular with the shift from conflicts between countries to conflict within countries, and the realization that more comprehensive concepts of security are needed in the post-cold war era.

40. Constraints have not deterred NGOs from wanting access to the United Nations. Even a cursory examination of the participation of NGOs in the decision-making systems and operational activities of the United Nations shows without any doubt that NGO involvement has not only justified the inclusion of Article 71 in the Charter of the United Nations, but that it has far exceeded the original scope of these legal provisions.

41. Evidence of this interactivity abounds at all levels: policy-making, research, information, education and advocacy, and operational activities. The contribution of NGOs has been significant in many areas of United Nations work. This has been especially the case in social, economic and sustainable development, e.g., the advancement of women, protection and regeneration of the environment, promotion and defence of human rights, protection and development of children, poverty alleviation, social development, population, drug abuse, etc. NGOs have also made important contributions in other fields such as promotion and defence of human rights, provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of natural and man-made disasters. And while consultative relations are legally confined to the activities of the Economic and Social Council, NGOs have also been actively involved in the United Nations work in the field of disarmament and, to a lesser extent, in peace. Furthermore, they are offering expertise and technical know-how in some of the new areas of United Nations involvement, especially reform of governance and electoral assistance.

42. Throughout the years, although the legal basis for NGO involvement in the activities of the United Nations has remained unchanged, actual relationships have been marked by two related trends: on the one hand, relationships have evolved to take into account the diversification process that has taken place in the NGO sector itself, with different types of NGOs developing contacts with the United Nations not only on the basis of their thematic interests but also as a

result of their forms of intervention. On the other hand, relationships have diversified well beyond the formal framework defined by Article 71 of the Charter and Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) for participation in the Council's decision-making activities, through a variety of informal types of collaboration in which NGOs have become recognized participants in the multilateral system. Nowhere is this more evident than in two areas, policy advocacy and operational activities, in which NGOs have developed, over the years, substantive expertise, know-how and experience from which the United Nations and its system of programmes and agencies have increasingly drawn to enrich their own contribution and performance.

43. What is true of the United Nations itself is even more easily observed when one turns one's attention to the activities of the United Nations funds and programmes and those of the specialized agencies. Even a cursory examination of the formal and programme relationships between NGOs and these institutions shows that NGOs have become continuing and indispensable participants with Governments and secretariats in support of international cooperation. Annex II provides a summary of the relations between NGOs and the funds and programmes of the United Nations; annex III provides a summary of the relations between NGOs and the specialized agencies.

44. While the trend in expansion of cooperation between the non-governmental sector and the United Nations has been a fairly continuous one, the experience of UNCED certainly represents an important advance in public participation, via NGOs and other institutions of civil society, in a major United Nations undertaking. These institutions contributed to the shaping of the agenda, to the process of international mobilization around the concept of sustainable development, and to the building of the political commitments that made possible the adoption of the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the conventions on climate change and the protection of biodiversity, and the statement of principles on forests.

45. Section III of Agenda 21 gives full recognition to the role of "major groups", which are important segments and constituencies within civil society, in the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 21. In particular, chapter 27 of Agenda 21, "Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations: partners for sustainable development", speaks of NGOs as playing a vital role in the shaping and implementation of participatory democracy, recognizes that they possess well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity in fields which will be of particular importance to the implementation and review of environmentally sound and socially responsible sustainable development, as envisaged throughout Agenda 21, and states that the NGO community offers a global network that should be tapped, enabled and strengthened in support of efforts to achieve these common goals.

46. Governments are invited in chapter 27 to efficiently channel integrated non-governmental inputs to the governmental policy development process. NGOs are also fully included in section IV, "Means of implementation", where they and major groups are referred to as important partners that should be given opportunities to make their contributions and establish appropriate relationships with the United Nations system, with support to be given to

developing countries non-governmental organizations and their self-organized networks.

47. Coming as it does from a long and complex intergovernmental process, such language marks a new point of departure for cooperation between institutions of civil society, Governments and the United Nations since it defines a relationship in which the broad non-governmental sector is no longer seen as an instrumentality of governmental and intergovernmental action but as a wide range of institutions that should be involved at all levels - in the policy dialogue for sustainable development, in the gathering of substantive knowledge, and in the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 21 - and that need to be strengthened in their capacities.

48. It is on that basis that the General Assembly, in resolution 47/191, and the Council, in decision 1993/215, decided that, in addition to NGOs in consultative status, those without consultative status that had been accredited to UNCED should be encouraged to maintain their involvement with the United Nations in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development and that special procedures should be established to facilitate that involvement.

49. The review of consultative arrangements undertaken by the Economic and Social Council needs to look comprehensively at the experience gained through the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and at all related developments, such as those referred to above, that have taken place to accommodate the growth in the interest of NGOs in participating in the work of the United Nations.

50. The following four chapters examine, respectively, experience in the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), the activities of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, the participation of NGOs in United Nations conferences and the support provided by the United Nations Secretariat. Chapter VI suggests issues to be considered by the Open-Ended Working Group and includes a series of recommendations on how to improve relationships between the United Nations and NGOs.

II. EXPERIENCE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1296 (XLIV)

The NGO consultative relationship with the Economic and Social Council

51. The consultative relationship of non-governmental organizations with the Economic and Social Council is guided by Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The resolution covers the following areas: principles to be applied in the establishment of consultative relations; principles governing the nature of the consultative arrangements; establishment of consultative relations; consultation with the Council; consultation with commissions and other subsidiary organs of the Council; consultations with ad hoc committees of the Council; consultation with international conferences called by the Council; suspension and withdrawal of consultative status; and the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations; and consultation with the Secretariat.

52. In the principles to be applied in the establishment of consultative relations, the resolution states, inter alia, that NGOs in consultative relations shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Council; that their aims and purpose shall be in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; that they shall undertake to support the work of the United Nations; that they shall be of representative character and of recognized international standing; that they shall have an established headquarters and a democratically adopted constitution; that they will be international in structure; that their resources shall be derived mainly from contributions of their national affiliates or from individual members; that national organizations shall normally present their views through the international NGOs to which they belong; that national organizations, however, may be admitted, after consultation with the Member State concerned for purposes of balanced geographical distribution and where they have special experience upon which the Council may wish to draw; and that account will be taken of whether an NGO's field of activity is wholly or mainly within the field of a specialized agency.

53. In the principles governing the nature of the consultative arrangements, a clear distinction is drawn between participation without vote and arrangements for consultation. The latter do not accord to NGOs the same rights as are accorded to States not members of the Council or to the specialized agencies; the arrangements should neither overburden the Council or hamper its role in coordination of policy and action; arrangements are established for the purpose of securing expert information or advice and to enable NGOs representing important elements of public opinion in a large number of countries to express their views.

54. In establishing consultative relations, the Council distinguishes between three categories of NGOs:

(a) Category I status may be granted to organizations which are concerned with most of the activities of the Council and can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that they have marked and sustained contributions to make to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations and are closely involved with the economic and social life of the peoples of the areas they represent and whose membership, which should be considerable, is broadly representative of major segments of population in a large number of countries;

(b) Category II status may be granted to organizations which have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council and which are known internationally within the fields for which they have or seek consultative status;

(c) Roster status may be granted to other organizations which the Council, or the Secretary-General of the United Nations, considers can make occasional and useful contributions to the work of the Council or its subsidiary bodies or other United Nations bodies within their field of competence. The Roster may also include organizations in consultative status or similar relationship with a specialized agency or a United Nations body.

55. NGOs in category I have the most comprehensive rights. They may propose, through the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Secretary-General, to place items on the provisional agenda of the Council and may propose items for the provisional agenda of subsidiary bodies.

56. NGOS in categories I and II may designate representatives to sit as observers at all public meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. NGOs on the Roster may be represented at public meetings concerned with matters within their field of competence.

57. NGOS in categories I and II may submit written statements relevant to the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. The statements shall be circulated by the Secretariat within certain technical limits, which vary according to the categories of status. NGOs on the Roster may be invited to submit written statements.

58. Concerning oral statements, NGO in Categories I and II may request to be heard by the Council in connection with specific items on its agenda. All such requests are first considered by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which then makes recommendations to the Council as to which organizations should be heard and on which items. With regard to hearings by subsidiary bodies of the Council, NGOs in categories I and II may consult directly with the subsidiary body concerned or make a request through a committee established for the purpose. NGOs on the Roster may also be heard by subsidiary bodies on the recommendation of the Secretary-General or at the request of the subsidiary body.

59. NGOS in categories I and II and on the Roster may be requested to carry out specific studies or prepare specific papers for commissions.

60. Suspension or withdrawal of consultative status may be decided by the Council:

(a) If there exists substantiated evidence of secret governmental financial influence to induce an organization to undertake acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

(b) If the organization clearly abuses its consultative status by systematically engaging in unsubstantiated or politically motivated acts against States Members of the United Nations contrary to and incompatible with the principles of the Charter;

(c) If, within the preceding three years, an organization had not made any positive or effective contribution to the work of the Council or its commissions or other subsidiary organs.

61. The Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations considers applications for consultative status, as well as applications for reclassification, and makes recommendations to the Council. Non-governmental organizations in Categories I and II must submit to the Committee quadrennial reports on their contribution to the work of the United Nations. Based on the findings of the Committee's examination of the report, the Committee may

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recommend to the Council a reclassification in status of the organization concerned.

62. The Committee may consult with NGOS in categories I and II on matters within their competence, other than items on the agenda of the Council, on which the Council or the Committee or the organization requests consultation. It may also consult with NGOs in categories I and II concerning specific items already on the provisional agenda of the Council.

63. The Committee considers requests from NGOs in category I for items to be placed on the provisional agenda of the Council, and makes recommendations to the Council.

64. NGOs in consultative status can consult with substantive units in the Secretariat on matters of mutual interest. The Secretary-General may request NGOs in categories I and II and on the Roster to carry out specific studies or prepare specific papers.

65. The Secretary-General is authorized to offer to NGOs in consultative status facilities which include distribution of Council documents, access to the press documentation services, arrangement of informal discussions, use of the libraries, provision of accommodation for conferences or smaller meetings on the work of the Council, appropriate seating arrangements and facilities for obtaining documents during public meetings of the General Assembly on economic and social matters.

Number of NGOs in consultative status with the Council

Year	Category I	Category II	Roster	Total
1948	7	32	2	41
1968	12	143	222	377
1991	41	354	533	928
1993	42	376	560	978

Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council

66. Following the inclusion of Article 71 in the Charter of the United Nations and the granting of the first consultative arrangements, NGOs in consultative status decided to cooperate in order to improve the consultative process and to coordinate their activities in relation to the United Nations. They established the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO). CONGO is governed by its General Conference, which meets every three years and elects a President and organizations to serve as its board. CONGO is principally concerned with the improvement of relations between NGOs and the United Nations. CONGO does not take positions on substantive matters. However, it has been providing, through various special thematic committees that meet in New York, Geneva and Vienna, forums for discussion of substantive matters by its members and with members of

the United Nations Secretariat, delegations and experts. CONGO boards and conferences have expressed opinions and made suggestions on the use and improvement of consultative relations, including suggestions in the forms of position papers for, and statements to, the Council and its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. In addition, since 1974 CONGO has sponsored several NGO forums in parallel with United Nations conferences.

NGOs in association with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

67. The mandate of the Department of Public Information (DPI) to work with NGOs derives from General Assembly resolution 13 (I), annex I, in which it was stated that the Department and its branch offices should actively assist and encourage national information services, educational institutions and other governmental and intergovernmental organizations of all kinds interested in spreading information about the United Nations. Formal NGO association with DPI was given legislative authority by the Economic and Council in resolution 1297 (XLIV) with reference to "the letter and spirit" of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

68. In cooperation with United Nations Information Centres and other United Nations offices world wide, the NGO Section of DPI evaluates applications from NGOs that wish to enter into formal association with the Department. A DPI committee examines these applications and takes decisions to include NGOs in the annual DPI/NGO Directory. Services offered to NGOs include regular mailings, briefings for NGO representatives, an annual NGO/DPI conference on a major global topic, and access to the NGO Resource Centre in New York. The NGO/DPI Executive Committee, composed of 18 members elected by NGOs in association with DPI for a one-year term, serves as a liaison between NGOs and the Department. It supports and co-manages, with the NGO Section of DPI, the organization of the annual NGO/DPI conference and other special events.

69. NGOs in consultative status with the Council are granted formal association with DPI on request. Other NGOs are requested to submit a written application and supporting documents on their activities, especially as they pertain to the work of the United Nations, and their capacity to engage in public information programmes.

Previous reviews of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) by the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

70. As foreseen in paragraph 40 (f) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has discussed the implementation of that resolution for a number of years. The following is a summary of these discussions.

71. In 1981, the Committee annexed to its report (E/1981/29 and Corr.1) a summary of the suggestions made during the course of its deliberations. The suggestions covered the following:

(a) The need to develop a means for ensuring enhanced participation and fuller contributions by NGOs to ad hoc conferences of the United Nations system, through the establishment of standard rules of procedure for such participation

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and by encouraging NGOs to contribute, in advance of such conferences, at the national and regional levels;

(b) The need to develop uniform rules of procedure for participation of NGOs in all United Nations bodies dealing with economic and social issues, including committees of the General Assembly;

(c) The need to increase the collaboration between NGOs and substantive offices of the Secretariat;

(d) The need to strengthen Secretariat services related to the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) by upgrading and strengthening the NGO Unit;

(e) The need to provide a clear distinction between NGOs in consultative status with the Council and NGOs affiliated with DPI;

(f) The need to encourage NGOs to expand their consultation and participation at the regional level.

72. In its resolution 1981/44, the Council took note of the report and requested the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to undertake a review of current practice related to the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and to present its findings and recommendations to the Council at its first regular session of 1983.

73. At its 1983 session, the Committee's discussions were based on a working paper submitted by the representative of Pakistan on this subject, as well as a statement by an NGO in category I and resolutions from CONGO. The working paper suggested a review of the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) that would involve Governments, the Secretariat and NGOs, on the basis of which recommendations would be made to the Council. The NGO statement proposed that the Committee study the broadening of the provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) so as to associate NGOs with the activities of the Secretariat from the early stages of project preparation. The CONGO resolutions, adopted by its 15th General Conference, called for:

(a) An extension of the formal relationship to the United Nations as a whole;

(b) The establishment of uniform procedures for the participation of NGOs in the activities of the United Nations, including standard rules for participation of NGOs in United Nations conferences;

(c) The establishment of a coordinating body to harmonize practices relating to the establishment of relationships between NGOs and various departments and programmes of the United Nations;

(d) The need to upgrade and strengthen the resources of the Secretariat's NGO Unit in view of the increase in its workload;

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(e) The convening of regular meetings between the CONGO Board and the officers of the Council and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations;

(f) The strengthening of relations between NGOs and the regional commissions of the United Nations;

(g) Improvement of United Nations-NGO cooperation through improvements in the provision of services to NGOs (e.g., timely documentation, briefings, conference facilities, etc.);

(h) A proposal to establish a special fund to facilitate greater participation by developing-country NGOs in United Nations meetings and conferences.

74. The Committee then decided, inter alia, to prepare a set of draft recommendations for circulation to Governments. It continued its discussion on these issues at its 1985 session, albeit without conclusion. At its 1987 session, the Committee had before it a note prepared by the Secretariat which presented a survey of the geographical and primary areas of activity of NGOs in consultative status. The Committee requested the Secretariat to undertake a more detailed study which would present information on the type, nature of activities, membership, geographical focus and level of activity of NGOs in consultative status.

75. At its 1989 session, the Committee considered the note prepared by the Secretariat. Committee members commented on the disappointing level of response by NGOs, particularly those on the Roster, to the questionnaire sent by the Secretariat. Several members requested the Secretariat to gather such information periodically on NGOs on the Roster with a view to ascertaining which among them were still functioning and, if it was determined that some were no longer active, to withdraw those organizations from the Roster.

76. While the Committee expressed the view that Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) should remain the basis of, and guiding element for, its work, several members pointed out that guidelines should be established to facilitate the interpretation of the provisions of the resolution, and proposed that the Committee recommend that the Council establish a working group to study further ways and means of improving the working methods of the Committee. Some members proposed that such a working group should undertake a comprehensive review of issues relating to the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and NGOs, while others said that Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) provided a clear basis for the Committee's work and had proved a valuable tool throughout the years. At its first regular session of 1989, the Council took note of the report of the Committee.

77. At its 1991 session, the Committee considered the report on the informal consultation held in 1990 between the Committee and NGOs in consultative status. The points emphasized by the NGOs during the consultation were the following:

(a) Extension of the consultative relationship to the Main Committees of the General Assembly;

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(b) Establishment of standard rules of procedure for the participation of NGOs in United Nations conferences, including a provision recognizing the right of all NGOs in consultative status to participate in such conferences and their preparatory process;

(c) The removal of all obstacles to the exercise by NGOs of their consultative status;

(d) Improvement in the coordination within the United Nations in order to remedy the application of different criteria and treatment for NGOs by different parts of the Secretariat.

78. Discussion of the report by Committee members emphasized the importance of the role and contributions of NGOs in consultative status to the activities of the United Nations, the importance of NGOs making full use of their status, and the practical limitations and time constraints regarding oral presentations by NGOs in the work of the General Assembly, its Main Committees and special sessions. It was suggested that by regrouping their views, NGOs would, when appropriate, ensure a modicum of participation in the work of the General Assembly. The Committee agreed that participation through written statements was very valuable and should be facilitated.

79. The Committee also decided to establish a working group open to all members of the Committee, as well as other interested States, to prepare draft guidelines of a technical nature for the 1993 session of the Committee, aimed at assisting the Committee to fulfil its responsibilities in the most effective manner. NGOs were invited to contribute to the working group through CONGO.

80. At its 1993 session, the Committee had before it the reports on the informal consultations held in 1991 and 1992 between the Committee and NGOs in status, at which NGOs reiterated the points made at the 1990 consultation, and suggested that a United Nations voluntary fund be established to assist NGOs in consultative status in sending more representatives from developing countries to United Nations meetings and conferences. The Committee took note of the reports.

81. The Committee also had before it the report of the Working Group established at the previous session (E/C.2/1993/6), in which the Working Group recommended to the Committee the adoption of a set of guidelines for NGOs applying for consultative status. The report, of which the Committee took note, seeks to provide clarification on paragraphs 3, 4, 5-7, 8, 9, 11 and 40 (a) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

Other contributions to a review of the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV)

82. At various points in time, NGOs, researchers and other interested individuals and organizations have offered comments on the existing arrangements for consultative status with the Council and proposals as to how to improve them, some of which are reflected in the previous section. For purposes of brevity and clarity, comments and proposals from such sources have been utilized as substantive inputs to chapter VI of the present report.

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III. COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Membership and composition

83. The Committee was established by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 3 (II) of 21 June 1946 and was originally composed of five members. The membership was increased to seven by Council resolution 288 B (X) of 27 February 1950, to 13 by Council resolution 1099 (XL) of 4 March 1966 and to 19 by Council resolution 1981/50 of 20 July 1981. The membership of the Committee consists of: (a) five members from African States; (b) four members from Asian States; (c) two members from Eastern European States; (d) four members from Latin American and Caribbean States; (e) four members from Western European and other States.

Terms of reference

84. The Committee's original terms of reference were set out in Council resolution 288 B (X), which was superseded by resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968. The main tasks of the Committee are (a) the consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by non-governmental organizations; (b) the consideration of quadrennial reports submitted by non-governmental organizations in categories I and II on their activities; (c) the implementation of the provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and the monitoring of the consultative relationship; and (d) any other issues which the Council may request the Committee to consider.

Applications/reclassifications

85. Pursuant to paragraph 40 (a) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), the Committee considers applications for consultative status in categories I and II and for listing on the Roster submitted by non-governmental organizations and requests for changes in status and makes recommendations thereon to the Council. Organizations are required to give due consideration to any comments on technical matters which the Secretary-General may make in receiving such applications for the Committee. At each session the Committee considers applications received by the Secretary-General not later than 1 June of the preceding year, on which sufficient data have been distributed to the members of the Committee not later than six weeks before the applications are to be considered. Reapplications by an organization for consultative status, or requests for a change in status, are considered by the Committee at the earliest at its first session in the second year following the session at which the substance of the previous application or request was considered, unless at the time of such consideration it was decided otherwise.

86. During the period under review, the Committee discussed issues relating to requests for consultative status and reclassification submitted by non-governmental organizations and took the following action.

87. The Committee, at its 1973 session, decided to include the following statement in its report to the Council: "Noting that Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) is not explicit regarding reclassification for non-governmental organizations placed on the Roster by action of the Secretary-General under

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paragraph 19 of this resolution, the Committee wishes to clarify this situation by establishing that paragraph 40 (a) of the resolution shall apply to these organizations as well as to non-governmental organizations placed in status by direct action of the Council's Committee. That is, organizations placed on the Roster by action of the Secretary-General who wish to apply for a change of status will be considered to be applying for reclassification."

88. The Committee, at its 1975 session, decided that the attention of the Economic and Social Council should be drawn to the criteria governing the classification of regional non-governmental organizations, a question on which the Committee believed that Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) was not sufficiently specific.

89. At its 1977 session, the Committee, in order to facilitate consideration of the applications from non-governmental organizations, requested the Secretariat to circulate applications as they were received and processed rather than together in one document, as had been the practice in the past.

90. During its review of future activities at its 1985 session, the Committee also discussed the question of the rationalization of its future work. A number of suggestions were made in this connection. Several delegations indicated that limiting the number of applications to be reconsidered at a given session of the Committee might improve the effectiveness of its work. It was suggested that applications from non-governmental organizations should be accepted only from those that had been in existence for more than four years. It was also proposed that priority should be given to applications from non-governmental organizations working in fields that were not frequently covered by the non-governmental organizations currently in consultative status. Several delegations suggested grouping non-governmental organizations whose activities were similar or related in nature, while others considered the practical aspects of this unworkable. With regard to the methods for rationalizing the consideration of applications from non-governmental organizations, several delegations suggested that the Committee might establish a working group which would undertake an examination of the application before the Committee began its consideration of all of the applications received; there was, however, no agreement on this matter. Various delegations also indicated that the work of the Committee in examining applications would be greatly facilitated by obtaining from the non-governmental organizations larger quantities of their publications and whatever reference material could be made available on their activities and aims.

91. At its session in 1987, under the item "Review of future activities", the Committee discussed the question again. One delegation expressed concern about the growing number of non-governmental organizations being given consultative status and suggested that organizations with a common purpose should unite and designate one organization to represent them. The same delegation proposed that a working group of the Committee could examine the applications before each session, with a view to identifying groupings of organizations. A number of delegations, however, opposed setting up such a group, since the Committee itself was not large and, moreover, all delegations would wish to review the applications. One delegation said that the work of non-governmental organizations was so helpful to the United Nations that more of them should be

accorded consultative status. One delegation expressed the need for the Committee to determine more specific guidelines to assist the Secretariat in reducing the number of applications from non-governmental organizations at an earlier stage.

92. At its 1989 session, the Committee emphasized that non-governmental organizations applying for consultative status should provide a comprehensive description of their activities. One representative said it should be emphasized that those non-governmental organizations with members in South Africa should provide clear and comprehensive information on their position on apartheid and on their members in South Africa. The Committee requested the Secretariat to bring those points to the attention of the non-governmental organizations concerned.

93. At its 1991 session, regarding the applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by non-governmental organizations, the Committee noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit of the Secretariat to implement the provisions of paragraph 40 (a) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and instructed the Unit to transmit to the Committee only those applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification for which the completed questionnaire had been submitted no later than 1 June of the year preceding the session of the Committee.

Quadrennial reports

94. Under paragraph 40 (b) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), organizations in consultative status in categories I and II submit to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, through the Secretary-General, every fourth year a brief report of their activities specifically as regards the support they have given to the work of the United Nations. Based on findings of the Committee's examination of the report and other relevant information, the Committee may recommend to the Council any reclassification in status of the organization concerned that it deems appropriate. However, under exceptional circumstances, the Committee may ask for such a report from an individual organization in category I or II or on the Roster, between the regular reporting dates.

95. At its 1977 session, the Committee considered the question of reviewing the activities of non-governmental organizations in consultative status, and, having regard to the provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), the Committee decided to invite the non-governmental organizations to submit to it, before 30 June 1978, reports on their activities covering the past four years. The attention of the non-governmental organizations was drawn to the fact that those reports were intended to enable the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, in accordance with Council resolutions 1296 (XLIV) and 1919 (LVIII), to determine the extent to which the non-governmental organizations had complied with the principles governing their consultative status and how their activities had contributed to the work of the United Nations.

96. The Economic and Social Council, by its decision 227 (LXII) of 13 May 1977, decided to take note of the part of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations regarding the review of the organizations,

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bearing in mind the recommendation made at the forty-sixth session of the Council that all non-governmental organizations in consultative status that had not submitted the necessary information concerning themselves within the prescribed time-limit should be subject to suspension or withdrawal of consultative status in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolutions 1296 (XLIV) and 1919 (LVIII). The Council also decided to request non-governmental organizations in consultative status to submit to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, before 30 October 1977, a report on their activities covering the past four years and to urge the Committee to carry out the mandate laid down in paragraphs 35, 36 and 40 of resolution 1296 (XLIV) and in resolution 1919 (LVIII) as a matter of priority, and to report to the Council at its sixty-fourth session, or immediately after the Committee's next meeting, on the extent to which non-governmental organizations in consultative status had complied with the principles governing their consultative status and how their activities had contributed towards the work of the United Nations.

97. Subsequently, the Committee took the following decisions regarding the format and content of the quadrennial reports:

(a) At its 1981 session, the Committee decided that quadrennial reports should be limited to no more than two pages single-spaced;

(b) At its 1989 session, the Committee stressed the need for non-governmental organizations required to submit quadrennial reports to provide the Secretariat with clear and timely information, including a brief introductory statement recalling the aims and purposes of the organization;

(c) At its 1991 session, the Committee emphasized the need for non-governmental organizations requested to submit quadrennial reports to provide a clear picture of their activities as they related to the United Nations. The Committee further noted that the reports should conform to the guidelines elaborated by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit pursuant to the relevant decisions of the Committee and decided that only those reports elaborated in conformity with the guidelines and submitted to the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit no later than 1 June of the year preceding the Committee's session would be transmitted to the Committee for consideration. The Committee recalled that organizations failing to submit adequate reports on time would be subject to any reclassification in status that the Committee might deem appropriate, in conformity with paragraph 40 (b) of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

98. Table 1 contains data on the number of applications for consultative status and for reclassification considered by the Committee and the action taken at its various sessions. Table 2 provides information on the review of the quadrennial reports by the Committee.

Table 1. Actions taken by the Committee on NGOs on applications and reclassifications

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1979	1981	1983	1984	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993
APPLICATIONS TOTAL	31	20	13	26 a/	25	21	7	32	13	48	64	30	88	78	61	42	40
Category I	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 b/	1	-
Category II	21	11	4	13	6	3	1	8	3	8	24	1	29	33	33	25	30
Roster	9	8	9	13	18	10	4	10	7	19	16	13	13	20	17	10	7
Rejected/no status	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	10	-	-	4	2	-	-	-
Withdrawn	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3	-	-	1	2	1
Deferred	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	13	1	11	7	12	21	18	9	3	1
Not considered	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	1	20	-	-	-	-
Other	-	1 a/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	5 a/	-	1 a/	1 b/
RECLASSIFICATIONS TOTAL	5	-	8	3	6	8	1	12	6	11	13	9	20	14	9	12	11
Category I	-	-	1	2	1	4	-	2	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	4	2
Category II	2	-	5	-	5	3	1	3	3	3	1	3 a/	7	9	6	5	8
Maintained	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	4	-	-	-	4	-	1	1
Withdrawn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Deferred	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	7	-	1	3	5	6	-	-	1	-
Not considered	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	3	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 b/	2 b/	-	3 b/	-	2 b/	-	-

(Notes on following page)

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Footnotes to table 1

a/ In addition, two non-governmental organizations placed on the Roster by the Secretary-General were granted category II status.

b/ The Economic and Social Council, by its decision 1989/106, decided to refer the application of the International Centre of Legal Science (Law World Organization), which had been recommended for category I status back to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations for further consideration at its 1991 session.

c/ The Council placed the organization, which was referred to it by the Committee, on the Roster.

d/ One was invited to apply with UNESCO, one was invited to apply with WHO, one was invited to resubmit and two were not approved.

e/ Referred back by the Council. The Committee decided not to grant status. The Council, by its decision 1991/216, decided to refer the application of Human Life International back to the Committee for further consideration at its 1993 session.

f/ Referred back by the Council. Rejected by the Committee.

g/ The Council, by its decision 1984/113, took note of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 1984 special session, with the exception of the recommendation for the reclassification from the Roster to category II of the International Police Association. The Council, taking into account the concern expressed by the members of the Council on the link between the International Police Association and apartheid in South Africa and having in mind its resolution 1982/16, decided not to approve the reclassification to category II of the International Police Association. The Council decided to invite the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to reconsider the current status of the International Police Association, bearing in mind Council resolution 1982/16, and to consider further the current status of the International Police Association with a view to taking a final decision at its first regular session of 1985.

h/ The Committee decided to transmit to the Council for action the application for reclassification submitted by the Minority Rights Group, together with the views expressed on it by delegations. The Council, by its decision 1981/163: (a) decided to refer back to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations the request for reclassification submitted by the Minority Rights Group; (b) expressed the hope that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations would continue to be guided in its future work by a spirit of accommodation and consensus.

i/ Considered but no decision taken.

j/ Not approved.

k/ No action taken.

Table 2. Action taken by the Committee on NGOs on quadrennial reports: summary table

	No. of organizations due to report	NGOs reporting in due time	Reports deferred due to late submission	NGOs failing to submit
1978 a/	213	195	8	10
1979	Data not available			
1981 b/	35	35		
1982 c/	186	165		21
1983	The Committee, owing to lack of time, decided to defer to its next session its consideration of the quadrennial reports.			
1984 d/	26	26		
1985	Owing to a lack of time, the Committee decided to defer consideration of the quadrennial reports to its session in 1987.			
1987 e/	230	218 8 (additional information)	12	
1989 f/	83	73	10	
1991 g/	235	206 (8 to submit additional information)	2	17
1993 h/	136	106		30

(Notes to table 2 on following page)

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Footnotes to table 2

a/ 1978: The Committee requested 11 organizations to submit additional information.

b/ 1981: The Committee requested two organizations to submit additional information.

c/ 1982: The Committee requested seven organizations to submit additional information. The Committee decided that one organization, which had submitted unsatisfactory additional information, be reclassified from category II to the Roster. Observations and reservations were expressed by members of the Committee on the activities of one organization.

d/ 1984: The Committee requested one organization to submit additional information.

e/ 1987: The Committee requested eight organizations to submit additional information. Observations and reservations were expressed by the members of the Committee on the reports of 18 organizations.

f/ 1989: The Committee decided to request two organizations to submit additional information. The Committee decided that three organizations, which had failed to submit additional information, as requested at the 1987 session, be reclassified from category II to the Roster. The Committee decided to request the three organizations to submit, in 1991, reports on their activities for 1986-1989, on the understanding that failure to do so would lead to withdrawal of status. The Committee decided that one organization, which had submitted unsatisfactory additional information, be reclassified from category II to the Roster. Observations and reservations were expressed by members of the Committee on the activities of one organization.

g/ 1991: The Committee requested eight organizations to submit additional information. The Committee decided to recommend that the consultative status of three organizations, which had failed to submit a detailed report on their activities as requested in 1989, be withdrawn. Observations were made on the reports of three organizations.

h/ 1993: One organization was requested to submit additional information. The Committee decided to recommend that the consultative status of eight organizations, which had failed to submit a detailed report on their activities for the period 1986-1989 as requested in 1991, be withdrawn. The Committee decided to recommend that six organizations be reclassified from category II to the Roster to provide a satisfactory report or satisfactory additional information. Comments were made on the activities of three organizations.

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99. It is evident that, over the years, the Committee has had to deal with a large number of applications for status and for reclassification and to review an increasing number of quadrennial reports within the limited time available to it during its two-week session every two years. The Committee has attempted, from time to time, to find ways and means of enhancing its effectiveness, but as the number of NGOs that it needs to consider and review has continued to increase, the Committee has on many occasions found it necessary to postpone consideration of applications for status or the review of quadrennial reports to subsequent sessions.

IV. PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES

100. The rules for participation of non-governmental organizations in international conferences convened by the United Nations are determined on a case-by-case basis, by the organ convening a given conference, directly or on the recommendation of the preparatory body for the conference (see table 3). These rules generally cover the criteria for both accreditation and participation, and although the rights of NGOs to attend and participate have varied from one conference to another, the recent trend has been towards greater flexibility in granting NGOs access to international conferences.

101. Most recently, the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Conference itself and its follow-up by the Commission on Sustainable Development have been opened up to an unprecedented degree to national, regional, local and other small specialized groups. Forthcoming conferences, such as those on women and on population and development, have also adopted fairly liberal criteria for NGO participation. While this flexibility has allowed extensive involvement of NGOs, including those from developing countries, in United Nations conferences, in some cases it has created inconsistencies by establishing separate tracks for the participation of NGOs in United Nations conferences. Thus, a large number of NGOs have been accredited by the Economic and Social Council for participation in the Commission on Sustainable Development separately from those granted consultative status in accordance with the provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The detailed decisions concerning the attendance and participation of NGOs in various aspects of the forthcoming conferences on population and women, the World Summit for Social Development and Habitat II, as well as the recently held World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, are set out in annex I of the present report.

Table 3. Legislative authority establishing the rules for NGO participation in various United Nations conferences

	Conference	Year	Criteria for NGO participation
1.	Habitat	1976	General Assembly resolution 3438 (XXX). (i) NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other directly concerned NGOs of a genuinely international character that may express the wish to be represented by observers.
2.	United Nations Water Conference	1977	Economic and Social Council resolution 1982 (LX). (i) NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other NGOs of a genuinely international character which are directly concerned and may express the wish to be represented as observers.
3.	United Nations Conference on Territorial Asylum	1977	A/CONF.78/12. NGOs concerned with problems relating to protection of refugees and having consultative status with ECOSOC.
4.	United Nations Conference on Desertification	1977	General Assembly resolution 31/108. (i) NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that might have a specific contribution.
5.	United Nations Conference on an International Code of Conduct on the Transfer of Technology	1978	General Assembly resolution 32/188. Directly concerned NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
6.	United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries	1978	General Assembly resolution 31/179. Interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.

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	Conference	Year	Criteria for NGO participation
7.	World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination	1978	General Assembly resolution 32/129. NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
8.	United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development	1979	General Assembly resolution 32/184. Directly concerned NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
9.	United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy	1981	General Assembly resolution 35/204. (i) Interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution.
10.	United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	1981	General Assembly resolution 35/205. NGOs in consultative status with UNCTAD and ECOSOC.
11.	Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	1982	General Assembly resolution 35/15. Directly concerned NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
12.	World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women	1980	General Assembly resolution 33/189. Interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
13.	World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women	1985	Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/28. Interested NGOs in consultative with ECOSOC.
14.	Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination	1983	General Assembly resolution 37/41. NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC which have contributed to the goals of the conference.

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	Conference	Year	Criteria for NGO participation
15.	International Conference on Population	1984	Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/6. (i) Interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution.
16.	International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking	1987	Economic and Social Council decision 1986/128. (i) Interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution.
17.	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development	1992	General Assembly resolution 44/228. Relevant NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. PrepCom decision 2/1 and General Assembly resolution 45/211. NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and others desiring to be accredited for participation in meetings of PrepCom. General Assembly resolution 46/168. All NGOs accredited to participate in the work of the PrepCom by the conclusion of its fourth session.

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	Conference	Year	Criteria for NGO participation
18.	World Conference on Human Rights	1993	General Assembly resolution 47/122 and PrepCom decision. (i) NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC which are active in the field of human rights and/or development as well as in the concerned region; (ii) Other NGOs which are active in the field of human rights and/or development, and have their headquarters in the concerned region, in prior consultation with the countries in question.
19.	United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks	1993	General Assembly resolution 47/192. General Assembly resolution 46/168. General Assembly decision 46/469. (i) Regional and subregional fisheries organizations; (ii) Relevant NGOs from developed and developing countries.
20.	Global Conference on the Development of Small Island Developing States	1994	General Assembly resolution 47/189. General Assembly resolution 46/168. Relevant NGOs from developed and developing countries, in particular those from small island developing States, including those related to major groups.
21.	World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction	1994	General Assembly resolution 48/188. (i) Relevant NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution and wish to be accredited may apply to the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

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	Conference	Year	Criteria for NGO participation
22.	International Conference on Population and Development	1994	ECOSOC resolution 1993/4. NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
23.	World Conference on Women	1995	General Assembly resolution 48/108. (i) NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution may be included by the Commission on the Status of Women.
24.	World Summit for Social Development	1995	PrepCom, organizational session. (i) NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution and wish to be accredited may apply to the Summit secretariat.
25.	Habitat II	1996	General Assembly resolution 47/180. (i) NGOs particularly those from developing countries and including those related to major groups; (ii) Other interested NGOs that may have a specific contribution and wish to be accredited may apply to the Conference secretariat.

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V. SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

Services provided by the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit of the United Nations Secretariat

102. The Non-Governmental Organizations Unit is located within the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The Unit is headed at the P-5 level and consists of three Professional and three General Service staff members. The resources of the Unit were augmented by one Professional and one General Service staff member following the review conducted by the Economic and Social Council in 1992 as a result of General Assembly decision 46/431 of 17 December 1991 and on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General on the effective functioning of the NGO unit (E/1992/63).

103. The functions of the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit, which are based on Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations and on Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) can be divided into three main components: (a) acting as substantive secretariat of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and of related meetings, which includes the preparation of all required documentation, (b) assisting the Committee and the Council in ensuring the full implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) on arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations and (c) acting as a focal point within the United Nations Secretariat for the provision of advice and information to Secretariat officials, the United Nations system, States Members of the United Nations and outside users, with regard to non-governmental organizations. From time to time the Unit is also called upon to provide services to ad hoc international conferences and meetings related to the contribution and participation of non-governmental organizations.

Services provided for NGO participation in United Nations conferences

104. In all the cases where the General Assembly has made budgetary allocations for the establishment of ad hoc secretariats for world conferences, relations with NGOs, including NGO accreditation to the conferences, have been principally handled by those secretariats, with guidance provided by the NGO Unit regarding NGO accreditation, and support from DPI for public information purposes. The same arrangements have been made when conference secretariat responsibilities have been assigned to Secretariat departments equipped with their own NGO liaison unit, e.g., the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (in the case of the two United Nations conferences on the least developed countries) and the Centre for Human Rights (in the case of the World Conference on Human Rights). In cases where there have been no budgetary allocations for an ad hoc secretariat, the NGO Unit has been called upon to provide a substantial part of the services regarding NGO participation.

105. In each case, the responsibilities have normally covered:

(a) Notification of the relevant intergovernmental decision regarding rules and criteria for the accreditation of NGOs;

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(b) Review of the applications submitted by NGOs in accordance with the relevant intergovernmental decision, and submission of documents to the preparatory committee of the United Nations conference for decision;

(c) Organization of logistical arrangements at the site(s) of the various sessions of the preparatory committee and the conference itself, with a view to facilitating NGO involvement in the formal process (NGO lounge, NGO access to official documentation, processing of NGO statements eligible for official distribution, preparation of lists of NGO representatives wishing to address plenary sessions, organization of regular briefings on the intergovernmental process and participation of NGOs therein, etc.);

(d) Organization of additional logistical arrangements to facilitate informal interaction between NGO representatives, governmental delegates and representatives of intergovernmental organizations at official sites (e.g., government-NGO "dialogues" on matters under discussion at the intergovernmental level);

(e) Support for fund-raising efforts to facilitate participation by NGO representatives from developing countries and, in the last several years, from countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and involvement in the management of the resources raised for such purposes;

(f) Liaison with NGO committees and coalitions responsible for organizing NGO parallel activities (especially NGO forums and newspapers monitoring sessions of preparatory committees and world conferences);

(g) Coordination with other Secretariat units concerned with NGO participation in United Nations conferences, especially the NGO Unit, DPI and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service.

106. Equivalent services have been provided by the secretariats of United Nations funds and programmes on the occasion of other world conferences, e.g., UNICEF for the World Summit for Children, and the negotiation of conventions, e.g., UNEP for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention on Biodiversity.

Services provided by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)

107. The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), an inter-agency unit dedicated to fostering cooperation between developed- and developing country NGOs and the United Nations on a broad range of development policy issues, has become increasingly involved in the organization of United Nations conferences, especially with regard to:

(a) Provision of substantive documentation on the background, themes and policy significance of world conferences, and on the policy content of the preparatory process;

(b) In cooperation with conference substantive secretariats, organization of briefing/orientation sessions for NGOs attending sessions of preparatory committees and world conferences;

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(c) Assistance to fund-raising efforts, especially as regards funds for developing-country NGO representatives, and (since the third session of the Preparatory Committee for UNCED) responsibility for managing and disbursing such funds, in cooperation with substantive secretariats;

(d) Organization of informal sessions for NGO representatives on aspects/themes of the intergovernmental process, and of informal dialogues between NGO representatives and government delegates;

(e) Similar support services for NGO participation in post-conference activities, especially with regard to (i) follow-up deliberations of the General Assembly on decisions taken by world conferences and (ii) activities of organs established as a result of decisions taken by world conferences and endorsed by the General Assembly, e.g., the Council's Commission on Sustainable Development;

(f) Similar support services for NGO participation in sessions of intergovernmental negotiating committees, e.g., those established for the conventions on climate change and on desertification.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues arising from experience in the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV)

108. The survey of experience in the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) contained in chapter II and the review of the functioning of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations contained in chapter III indicate that the Committee has been able, for the most part, to carry out the guidelines and provisions of that resolution. Over the years, the Committee has brought into consultative status with the Council some 1,000 NGOs on the basis of that resolution. It has proceeded with a review of these organizations and, from time to time, it has also considered a number of questions related to the granting of consultative relations to NGOs. Most recently, the Committee, at its 1993 session, discussed and took note of some practical guidelines for the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

109. However, experience in the implementation of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) also brings out several sets of interrelated issues that need to be addressed during the current Council review:

(a) Issues related to the nature, objectives and substantive content of the relationship between the United Nations and NGOs, leading to the question whether too much emphasis has been placed on looking upon NGOs as disseminators of information about the United Nations and its activities and too little emphasis on NGOs as (i) organizations of civil society that want to strengthen their links to global governance and (ii) generators and reservoirs of substantive expertise and practical experience that are necessary to the formulation of international legal instruments, policies and programmes, and to their implementation nationally and globally;

(b) Issues related to the scope of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) in terms of its coverage of the organs of the United Nations. Limitations arise from the fact that the resolution identifies the consultative relationship only with the Economic and Social Council and does not include the General Assembly and its Main Committees, or its other subsidiary organs;

(c) Issues related to the need to give greater attention to the institutional, cultural, thematic and functional diversity that exists among NGOs, both between and within countries and regions, and to their differing requirements for policy dialogue, programme implementation, and exchange and dissemination of information;

(d) Issues arising from the resolution's principal focus on international organizations, whereas the growth of the non-governmental sector in the last two decades has seen an unprecedented rise in national and regional NGOs that have a significant impact on society and governance, in both developed and developing countries, and that seek increasingly to collaborate with the United Nations in the economic, social, humanitarian, environmental and human rights areas;

(e) Issues arising from the quasi-exclusive emphasis given in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) to relations with NGOs at Headquarters level, and the need to find a more effective balance between the global, regional and national levels, as well as between the various dimensions e.g., policy formulation and programme development and implementation of the relationship between the United Nations and NGOs;

(f) Issues related to the practical and procedural problems that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has confronted with increasing acuity in carrying out its mandate under Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The Committee, which meets only every two years, handles a growing volume of work relating to the granting of consultative status, reclassification and the quadrennial review of NGOs already in consultative status. The wide range of NGOs that need to be covered in this review does not allow the Committee to carry out an in-depth analysis of these reports;

(g) Issues that stem from the lack of interaction between the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and other subsidiary bodies of the Council and the General Assembly that deal with economic, social, environmental and humanitarian matters. As a result, the Committee has tended to work in relative isolation from emerging trends in various substantive fields;

(h) Issues related to the participation of NGOs in United Nations conferences, about which there continues to be a need to adopt standard rules. Stock must be taken of both emerging patterns and inconsistencies inherited from past practices in order to reach agreement on a basic framework that will be conducive to broad and effective participation by NGOs;

(i) Finally, issues that concern the nature, scope and range of services that the Secretariat would need to support an improved relationship between the United Nations and NGOs. Three issues of an administrative/financial nature may in particular need to be considered in that light: (1) the capacity of the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit to carry out the work required by the

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rapidly expanding number of NGOs in consultative status and of NGOs seeking accreditation to United Nations conference processes; (2) the funding of participation of NGOs in United Nations processes, which may require an adjustment in United Nations administrative/financial regulations; and (3) the predictability of support for the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service to give it the financial viability needed for effective programme planning. An adequate response to these questions will logically depend on an assessment of needs once the review determines the character and institutional requirements of that relationship.

Issues suggested for consideration by the Open-Ended Working Group

110. In light of the information provided in the previous chapters and the issues identified in the section above, the following section contains suggestions as to a possible series of questions for discussion by the Open-Ended Working Group. This section has been prepared with a view to facilitating the Working Group's identification of the elements of debate that should be taken into account with respect to each question and the elaboration of a possible programme of work following the first session of the Working Group. Account has been taken, in preparing this section, of the discussions as well as various studies and proposals originating in non-governmental and academic circles and deliberations of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (see chap. II and Selected Bibliography).

General considerations

111. Several general considerations that are currently not explicitly included in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) but form part of the evolution in the relationship between the United Nations and NGOs deserve consideration by the Open-Ended Working Group:

(a) Scope and nature of arrangements:

(i) The future relationship between the United Nations and NGOs could have as its main objective to provide an enabling environment for the contribution of the institutions of civil society to global governance and for the establishment of an enhanced relationship between the United Nations and the institutions of civil society on the basis of common ideals, purposes and interests;

(b) Interaction of the institutions of civil society with national and global governance. Account needs to be taken of the following:

(ii) The contribution that NGOs have already made in all the major areas in which the United Nations is involved, their role in making the work of the United Nations better known to their constituencies and the general public, and their positive influence in alerting the international community to emerging issues and in proposing ways in which they can be addressed;

(iii) The emergence of civil society as a cause and consequence of positive transformations in governance at the national, regional and global levels;

(iv) The challenges facing the international community, which increasingly require that Governments and the institutions of civil society cooperate at both policy and programme levels;

(v) The growing practice and scope of cooperation between Governments and the institutions of civil society in a wide range of fields and activities, from policy dialogue to operational programmes;

(vi) The role that NGOs play in helping to build participatory democracy;

(c) Diversity and growth within civil society:

(vii) Recognition should be accorded to the changes that have taken place within the non-governmental sector, especially as regards (i) the growth in numbers of national and regional organizations and networks; (ii) the significant expansion of the NGO sector in developing countries; (iii) the re-emergence of NGOs in countries in transition; and (iv) new partnerships between developed-country and developing-country NGOs;

(d) Roles and responsibilities of NGOs as regards the United Nations. Account needs to be taken of the following:

(viii) The various functions that NGOs assume in their relationship to the United Nations, such as (i) policy analysis and advocacy, (ii) substantive expertise, (iii) capacity to plan and implement programmes and (iv) capacity to participate in the implementation and monitoring of United Nations programmes of action;

(ix) The fact that as the history of relations clearly shows, NGOs, like Governments, interact with the United Nations Member States, decision-making machinery, the Secretariat and programmes in a wide variety of formal and informal ways;

(x) The importance of the role played by NGOs in helping to create or strengthen a positive context for development, through empowerment of people at the community level, participation of communities in decision-making, and improved dialogue between people and governance;

(e) United Nations system:

(xi) Future arrangements could include provisions for inter-agency cooperation, with a view to monitoring developments across the entire range of United Nations institutions, stimulating inter-agency cooperation and identifying, on a "best practice" basis, ways to improve relationships with NGOs;

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(f) Monitoring and review of arrangements:

(xii) This could include provisions for monitoring and reviewing the relationship between the United Nations and NGOs so as to enable Governments, NGOs and the Secretariat to propose and agree on improvements at reasonable intervals.

Specific areas suggested for the review of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV)

Institutional and thematic scope of arrangements

112. Although Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations identifies the Economic and Social Council as the organ responsible for making consultative arrangements, numerous recommendations have been made, especially by NGOs since the mid-1970s, to extend the scope of consultative arrangements beyond the Council in order for NGOs to contribute as comprehensively as possible to the work of the United Nations. Such extension is deemed desirable if the relationship is to cover all United Nations organs that are competent in economic and social matters and, *a fortiori*, those organs that have competence in political and humanitarian questions. 1/

1/ Current practice allows NGOs in consultative status with the Council, in the absence of a formal status in the General Assembly, to participate in the public sessions of the latter's Main Committees, albeit without the right to either circulate written statements or make oral presentations. Although confined mostly to informal working methods, participation by NGOs in the work of the General Assembly has significantly risen over the years and many NGOs in consultative status that have representatives in New York have had a stronger presence in the General Assembly than in the Council. In particular, a number of Main Committees have devised informal arrangements which have allowed NGO representatives to make oral statements and NGO documents have been made available, on an informal basis, outside Committee rooms.

In particular, NGOs have been able to participate, through hearing sessions, in the activities of special committees of the General Assembly, especially the Special Committee on Apartheid and the Special Committee on Decolonization.

NGOs have also been able to take part in special sessions of the General Assembly and to address the Ad Hoc Committee or the Committee of the Whole (first, second and third special sessions on disarmament, special session on the critical economic situation in Africa, special session on apartheid, special session on drugs, and special session on international economic cooperation, in particular the revitalization of growth and development of the developing countries). Such practices have allowed the General Assembly to hear NGOs without NGO statements appearing in full in the records of the plenary meetings. NGOs that have made such oral statements have had their names recorded on a list that appears as part of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

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Definition of NGOs

113. Chapter I of the present report draws attention to the reservations expressed regarding the phrase "non-governmental organizations", especially to the fact that it defines organizations negatively and exclusively on the basis of their existence as institutions outside the State. The Open-Ended Working Group may wish, through a dialogue with a wide cross-section of NGOs, to consider alternatives to the current phrase with a view to (a) taking into account the broader reality of civil society of which these organizations are a part and (b) recognizing the diversity of institutions that operate within civil society, e.g., voluntary organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, church and church-related organizations, research and advocacy institutions, and self-help and grass-roots groups, which represent not only different constituencies and organizational categories, but also different forms of involvement in the activities of the United Nations.

114. In this respect, attention should be given in the review to the significant changes that have taken place in the NGO sector as regards types and modes of operation of these organizations, e.g. the emergence of informal national, regional and international coalitions, such as thematic networks, and national and regional organizations that are not formally affiliated with international NGOs. Information and communication technology makes it possible for NGOs world wide to exchange points of view and develop consensus in a participatory manner, as well as to have exchanges with Governments and intergovernmental organizations.

115. An interpretive guideline is proposed in document E/C.2/1993/6 regarding paragraphs 5 and 7 of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The guideline purports to exclude from consultative relations five types of institutions: institutions of learning and research (schools, universities and similar institutions); political parties; commercial-sector entities (corporations, businesses and consulting firms); religious faiths, churches and orders; and sects and cults. Several questions should be considered with regard to three of these types of organizations:

(a) The exclusion of institutions of learning and research from consultative arrangements raises the question whether it is in the interest of the United Nations to maintain formal channels of communication with such institutions. Regional and international associations and federations of teachers and academics are already in consultative status, as well as private, not-for-profit research institutions that specialize in areas of concern to the United Nations. Given the long-standing and growing interest of the academic and research sector in the work of the United Nations, and the wide range of questions on which the United Nations requires support from that sector, the review might wish to consider whether special arrangements should not be made to enable the United Nations to interact more systematically with the research and academic community (see below, "Categories of status");

(b) The exclusion of for-profit entities clarifies a definitional criterion of NGOs that had been left out of the text of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) - namely, that NGOs are non-profit institutions. Trade federations and business councils are eligible for, and have been granted, consultative status. For the same reasons as those given above in subparagraph (a), suggestions have been made at various points in time that such organizations might constitute a separate status, or category of status. The Open-Ended Working Group may want to give further consideration to this point;

(c) Concern has been expressed regarding the proposal to exclude religious faiths, churches and orders (as differentiated from religious councils and lay bodies) as reflecting a lack of understanding about the nature and structure of religious organizations (see CONGO, 1994).

Definition of an international NGO

116. Interpretive guidelines are proposed in document E/C.2/1993/6 regarding the criteria enunciated in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The first guideline proposes to regard as international an NGO that is "active in at least two countries in different regions". Concern has been voiced that such a guideline could have the effect of (a) conferring eligibility for status to "international" NGOs with minimal membership, or even encouraging national NGOs to replicate themselves in one country of another region for the purpose of becoming eligible for status, while (b) leaving regional NGOs with members in a significant number of the region's countries (a number of which have acquired status with the Council) without being recognized as an institutional category.

117. In reviewing the interpretive guidelines proposed on the subject of the "recognized international standing" of an international NGO, the Open-Ended Working Group may want to take into account substantive considerations, such an assessment of the quality and regularity of contributions, e.g. publications, to the field(s) in which the NGO is active, and of contributions to the work of the United Nations in these same fields.

Definition of a national NGO

118. Interpretive guidelines are proposed on this subject in document E/C.2/1993/6, with regard to paragraph 9 of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). The first proposed guideline, which stipulates that "any national organization affiliated to an international non-governmental organization working in the same field, covering the same subject, should not apply for consultative status", endorses a position which has been consistently defended by international NGOs. The issue has arisen recently with the accreditation to UNCED, and subsequently to the Commission on Sustainable Development, of some national member associations of international NGOs already in status with the Council. Although the interest in, and commitment to, United Nations processes on the part of such national NGOs must be very welcome and, indeed, encouraged, the granting of separate accreditation - and separate status - raises issues regarding the desirability of such practices, from the point of both the raison d'être and functioning of international NGOs vis-à-vis their national members, and the carrying capacity of the intergovernmental organs and Secretariat services dealing with such applications.

119. Concern has been expressed over one of the two elements of the definition of a national NGO - that "its programme of work is international in scope". This would seem to apply essentially, although not exclusively, to

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developed-country NGOs with "overseas" programmes in developing countries, and, therefore, to introduce criteria based on access to resources.

120. The other criterion of eligibility of a national NGO proposed in this guideline is that "it has particular competence that international organizations working in the same field, already in status with the Economic and Social Council, do not have". Although difficult to determine in practice, this criterion does open up the consultative arrangement to greater participation by national NGOs that are not members of international NGOs in consultative status and that have original contributions to make to the Council.

121. Concern has been expressed over the years by NGOs regarding the fact that national NGOs may be admitted "after consultation with the Member State concerned", a clause often regarded as a legacy of the climate of suspicion and competition that prevailed in international relations when the Council drafted resolution 1296 (XLIV). The Open-Ended Working Group may want to discuss this matter and propose ways in which, should the principle of consultation be upheld, it could be observed with maximum simplicity, e.g. on a "no objection basis".

Categories of status

122. Various opinions seem to have coexisted for many years on the usefulness of the classification of NGOs by Council resolution 1296 (XLIV). While many have supported the legitimacy and usefulness of the distinction between categories I and II and the Roster, some specific concerns have been registered:

(a) Although the classification was originally intended to reflect the various magnitudes of "interface" between NGOs and the Council and its subsidiary bodies, it has gradually become perceived as a hierarchical system within which NGOs can be promoted from the Roster to category II and from category II to category I;

(b) There is a need for greater transparency in the granting of consultative status, especially as regards the application of criteria for classification;

(c) Although NGOs in categories I and II are requested to submit quadrennial reports, the monitoring of the exercise of consultative status has been concerned more with respect for the formal aspects of consultative status than substantive contributions to, and interaction with, the United Nations.

123. The review provides an opportunity to assess the relevance of the existing categories and whether the current classification does enable the United Nations to benefit to the fullest extent from the expertise and outreach of NGOs which are identified in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) as the two main reasons for establishing consultative relations with NGOs. Positions on these questions vary widely from advocating the abolition of the categorization because the current categories and criteria have proved in practice to be non-functional, to wanting to maintain a classification which reflects objective differences between NGOs (scope, functions, history of involvement in the United Nations, capacity to advise and support the United Nations in specific areas, etc.).

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Should the principle of classification be retained, there seems to be a broad measure of agreement among both consultative and non-consultative NGOs on the need for greater transparency and flexibility. The review could also look into the experience of various institutions of the United Nations system which have established consultative arrangements (see annexes II and III).

124. Based on the experience of UNCED and its institutional follow-up, suggestions have been made to either replace or supplement the existing system of categories by creating new, non-hierarchical categories which would be defined according either to the issue areas with which NGOs are concerned (sustainable development, human rights, etc.) or to their functions (information, research, advocacy, operational programmes, etc.).

125. Whatever system is preferred, it would seem important to design for each category a set of rights and responsibilities on both the United Nations and NGO sides of the consultative arrangement, with a view to facilitating the monitoring of the relationship and the evolution of the legal framework. Greater clarity in this respect would make it possible, for example, for the Secretariat to develop, with full transparency, a system of factual "report cards" on the involvement of NGOs in consultative status in United Nations activities.

126. It has also been suggested that NGOs should elaborate among themselves a voluntary code of conduct on NGO relations with the United Nations, which they could use for self-regulation.

Consultative arrangements and accreditation to United Nations conferences

127. In the tradition of NGO involvement in the United Nations, a distinction was drawn between, on the one hand, the establishment of consultative relations, whose purpose is to enable NGOs that meet specific requirements of competence to take part, on a continuing basis, in the activities of the organs to which their category of status gives access, and, on the other hand, participation in United Nations conferences, which used to be seen more as an instrument of public mobilization around major events on the intergovernmental agenda. 2/

2/ Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) does not cover the participation of NGOs linked in United Nations conferences. In practice, however, a strong link has been established between consultative status and conference accreditation; taking into account their ongoing relationship to United Nations activities in the economic and social fields, NGOs in consultative status have generally been given preferential access by being granted accreditation automatically if they express the will to attend.

A long established practice has made it possible for non-consultative NGOs wishing to participate in conferences to be accredited by the preparatory committee of the conference, after submission of an application to the secretariat of the conference. In the evaluation of the relevance of applications from non-consultative NGOs, it is also an established practice that their background and involvement in the theme of the conference should be taken

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128. For a number of reasons, the traditional distinction between consultative status and accreditation to conferences has been considerably eroded. First, NGO participation in United Nations conferences has become a much more intensive and extended process which covers not only the conferences themselves but every session of their preparatory committees, with an increasing number of NGOs focusing on the substantive process through communications with Governments at both national and United Nations levels.

129. Second, NGO involvement in United Nations conferences generates a desire on the part of many NGOs to remain committed to United Nations efforts in the follow-up phase, with a view to monitoring the international community's implementation of the commitments entered into at such conferences.

130. Third, as has been the case with UNCED and the follow-up establishment, by the General Assembly, of the Commission on Sustainable Development, a substantial part of the NGO momentum generated for the conference can be expected to be thrust upon the activities of a newly created intergovernmental body.

Commission on Sustainable Development

131. Following UNCED, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/191, which specifies that arrangements for NGO accreditation and participation in the Commission on Sustainable Development should take into account both the established rules of procedure of the Council and its functional commissions, as well as relevant decisions and the rules of procedure of UNCED and relevant provisions of chapter 38 (on international institutional arrangements) of Agenda 21 (see chap. I of the present report). This was followed by the adoption of Council decision 1993/215, by which it was determined, *inter alia*, that:

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into account. Accreditation to United Nations conferences has tended in recent years to be granted at successive sessions of the preparatory committees for these conferences and to be completed at the last session of the preparatory committees. While initially intended principally for the participation of international NGOs not in status, this procedure has, over the years, been applied more and more flexibly in response to the growing demand from national NGOs.

In an attempt to achieve equitable representation of NGOs from developed and developing countries and from all regions and also to ensure fair balance between NGOs with an equitable focus and those with a development focus, the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) decided to invite "competent and relevant" NGOs, whether in consultative status or not, to become accredited to UNCED. UNCED had the largest number of NGOs (over 1,400) ever accredited to a United Nations conference.

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> "Any non-governmental organization which was accredited to participate in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by the conclusion of its fourth session could apply for and should be granted Roster status, subject to approval by the Council and bearing in mind the provisions of Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations."

In decision 1993/220, the Council decided to accredit to the Commission on Sustainable Development those non-governmental organizations listed in the note by the Secretariat (E/1993/65) in application of Council decision 1993/215. Some 550 NGOs were thus accredited (approximately half of those NGOs accredited to UNCED that were not in consultative status with the Council).

132. Two sets of issues arise from the UNCED-Commission on Sustainable Development experience. First, the decisions taken effectively create a precedent in that NGOs not in consultative status with the Council can be accredited to a functional commission of the Council on the basis of their accreditation to a United Nations conference but without explicit reference to the rules and criteria established by the Council in resolution 1296 (XLIV).

133. This precedent has been interpreted in different ways. Some have argued that, while trying to open up the United Nations to greater NGO participation, the addition of several hundred NGOs to the Roster will, in addition to adding to the management problems of the Secretariat, give rise to practical difficulties in the exercise of the rights attached to accreditation due to the large number of NGOs wanting to be involved in the work of the Commission, limit the ability of NGOs in consultative status to exercise their rights (e.g., through the fact that these NGOs cannot have their written submissions issued by the Secretariat as official documents), and risk generating adverse feelings among Governments owing to a possible fear of NGO "crowding" of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

134. Others have welcomed the decision to open up the follow-up to UNCED to the broad range of organizations that had been involved in the UNCED process and were recognized, in Agenda 21, as essential partners in the monitoring and implementation of UNCED decisions. While mindful of the rights of NGOs in consultative status, they emphasise the fact that special importance is attached in Agenda 21 to NGO and major group involvement at all levels, and that it is therefore important that, in addition to the international NGOs in consultative status, national and regional organizations be enabled to maintain the momentum of public mobilization and support for United Nations efforts to build a broader constituency worldwide for sustainable development. They point to the fact that, while management problems do exist, "crowding" can be, and has already been, avoided through the use of informal consultative mechanisms among NGOs and the designation, through such procedures, of spokespersons.

135. Second, clarification is required as to the exact status of those NGOs accredited to the Commission on Sustainable Development, since there exists a hiatus between Council decision 1993/215, paragraph 2 (c), and decision 1993/220, in that the former equates accreditation to the Commission with Roster status while the latter decision speaks only of accreditation to the Commission. Inclusion of the NGOs accredited to the Commission in the Roster is compatible

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with the original objectives regarding the creation of the Roster, especially in that, as stipulated in paragraph 19 of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), placement of an NGO on the Roster "shall not in itself be regarded as a qualification for general or special consultative status should an organization seek such status". Establishing a distinction between accreditation to the Commission and placement on the Roster would be equivalent to creating a new category of NGOs.

136. Given the large number of NGOs currently involved in the preparatory processes of United Nations conferences, it would be helpful if the Council review advanced the discussion on these points.

New mechanisms for cooperation between NGOs and the United Nations

137. It has often been suggested that the most limiting aspect in the existing legislation on relations between the United Nations and NGOs is that while it opens up channels of communication with Governments and intergovernmental institutions, there are no provisions for a sustained two-way dialogue between NGOs and the Member States. Much progress has been made in recent years in this respect through the widening range of possibilities for NGOs to participate in intergovernmental meetings (beyond the formal rights granted to NGOs in consultative status and NGOs accredited to world conferences), as well as the intensification of the informal dialogue between NGOs and Governments.

138. Based on the success of such practices, it would seem desirable for the Open-Ended Working Group to review the paragraphs of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) dealing with the organization of hearings and to propose a more contemporary definition of hearings based on existing parliamentary practices. The organization of sessions in which cross-sections of the non-governmental sector would be invited to testify before government representatives could greatly improve the quality and regularity of the expertise and advice that Governments could draw upon in preparing major intergovernmental initiatives.

Decentralization of relationships between the United Nations and NGOs

139. Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) is essentially a framework for relations between the United Nations and NGOs at the policy level and at the global level. In practice, however, NGO cooperation with the United Nations has, over the years, grown significantly in two complementary directions: first, through policy-oriented activities at the regional level (e.g., cooperation between the Economic Commission for Africa and NGOs since the 1968 special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa); and second, in operational activities at the national and regional levels, as evidenced in particular in the report prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU, 1993). Policy-level involvement of NGOs in United Nations-related processes has also

increased, especially since UNCED, with the establishment of national machinery in a number of countries to guide country implementation of Agenda 21. 3/

140. It is suggested that the Open-Ended Working Group include these other aspects of the relationship between NGOs and the United Nations in its work programme, with a view to establishing stronger linkages between the various types and levels of NGO cooperation with the United Nations and building greater sustainability in such cooperation.

3/ For example, in the Philippines, with the establishment by the President, in September 1992, of the Philippines Council for Sustainable Development, a consultative policy body in which representatives of NGOs and people's organizations constitute one third of the membership, and Government representatives two thirds.

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Annex I

RULES FOR PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES

International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994)

1. The Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1993/4, adopted the modalities for the participation in and contribution to the Conference and its preparatory process of non-governmental organizations, as follows:

Participation of non-governmental organizations in the International Conference on Population and Development and its preparatory process

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which express their will to attend the Conference and its Preparatory Committee meetings, shall be accredited for participation. Others wishing to be accredited may apply to the Conference secretariat for this purpose in accordance with the requirements of the present resolution.

The secretariat of the International Conference on Population and Development shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation, in accordance with the provisions of this resolution, of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process.

All such applications must be accompanied by information on the organization's competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, indicating the particular areas of the Conference preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain, and which should include, *inter alia*, the following information:

(a) The purpose of the organization;

(b) Information on its programmes and activities in areas relevant to the Conference and its preparatory process and in which country(ies) they are carried out;

(c) Confirmation of its activities at the national and/or international level;

(d) Copies of its annual reports with financial statements, and a list of members of the governing body and their country of nationality;

(e) A description of its membership, indicating the total number of members and their geographical distribution.

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In the evaluation of the relevance of non-governmental applications for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process, it is agreed that their background and involvement in population issues or population and development issues, including those mentioned in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1991/93, will determine their relevance.

Non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation shall be asked to confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the Conference.

In cases where the Conference secretariat believes, on the basis of the information provided in accordance with the present resolution, that the organization has established its competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, it will recommend to the Preparatory Committee that the organization be accredited. In cases where the Conference secretariat does not recommend the granting of accreditation, it will make available to the Preparatory Committee its reasons for not doing so. The Conference secretariat should ensure that its recommendations are available to members of the Preparatory Committee at least one week prior to the start of each session.

The Preparatory Committee will decide on all proposals for accreditation within twenty-four hours of the Conference secretariat's recommendations having been taken up by the Preparatory Committee in plenary meeting. In the event of a decision not being taken within this period, interim accreditation shall be accorded until such time as a decision is taken.

A non-governmental organization that has been granted accreditation to attend a session of the Preparatory Committee may attend all its future sessions.

In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the International Conference on Population and Development, non-governmental organizations shall have no negotiating role in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process.

Relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may be given an opportunity to briefly address the Preparatory Committee in plenary meeting and its subsidiary bodies. Other relevant non-governmental organizations may also ask to speak briefly at such meetings. If the number of requests is too large, the Preparatory Committee shall request the non-governmental organizations to form themselves into constituencies, each constituency to speak through one spokesperson. Any oral intervention by a non-governmental organization should, in accordance with normal United Nations practice, be at the discretion of the Chairman and with the consent of the Preparatory Committee.

Relevant non-governmental organizations may, at their own expense, make written presentations during the preparatory process in the official languages of the United Nations as they deem appropriate. Those written

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presentations will not be issued as official documents except in accordance with United Nations rules of procedure.

Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (Beijing, 1995)

2. The General Assembly, by its resolution 48/108, decided, taking into account Commission on the Status of Women resolution 37/7 of 25 March 1993, to adopt the modalities for the participation in and contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women and its preparatory process by the non-governmental organizations, particularly those from the developing countries, set out in the annex to the resolution as follows:

Participation of non-governmental organizations in the Fourth World Conference on Women and its preparatory body

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council that express the wish to attend the Conference and the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, acting as its preparatory body, will be accredited for participation. Others wishing to be accredited may apply to the Conference secretariat for that purpose in accordance with the following requirements:

(a) The secretariat of the Fourth World Conference on Women will be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation, in accordance with the provisions set out below, of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Conference and the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory body;

(b) All such applications must be accompanied by information on the competence of the organization and on its relevance to the work of the preparatory body, indicating the particular areas of the preparations for the Conference to which such competence and relevance pertain, and should include the following:

(i) The purposes of the organization;

(ii) Information on its programmes and activities in areas relevant to the Conference and on the country or countries in which those programmes and activities are carried out;

(iii) Confirmation of its activities at the national and/or the international level;

(iv) Copies of its annual reports, with financial statements and a list of members of the governing body and their country of nationality;

(v) A description of its membership, indicating the total number of members of the governing body and their country of nationality;

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(c) Non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation will be asked to confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the Conference;

(d) In cases where the Conference secretariat believes, on the basis of the information provided in accordance with the present document, that an organization has established its competence and relevance to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory body, it will recommend to the Commission that the organization be accredited. In cases where the Conference secretariat does not recommend the granting of accreditation, it will make such information available to members of the Commission at least one week prior to the start of each session;

(e) The Commission on the Status of Women will decide on all proposals for accreditation within 24 hours of the recommendations of the Conference secretariat having been taken up by the Commission in plenary session. Should a decision not be taken within that period, interim accreditation will be accorded until such time as a decision is taken;

(f) A non-governmental organization that has been granted accreditation to attend one session of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory body may attend all future sessions and the Conference;

(g) In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the Fourth World Conference on Women, non-governmental organizations will have no negotiating role in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process;

(h) Relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may be given the opportunity briefly to address the Commission on the Status of Women acting as preparatory body in plenary meeting and its subsidiary bodies. Other relevant non-governmental organizations may also ask to speak briefly at such meetings. If the number of requests is too large, the Commission will request that non-governmental organizations form themselves into constituencies, with each constituency speaking through one spokesperson. Any oral intervention by a non-governmental organization should, in accordance with usual United Nations practice, be made at the discretion of the Chairman and with the consent of the Commission;

(i) Relevant non-governmental organizations may, at their own expense, make written presentations in the official languages of the United Nations during the preparatory process, as they deem appropriate. Those written presentations will not be issued as official documents unless they are in accordance with the rules of procedures of the Conference.

World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995)

3. The Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, at its organizational session, held at Headquarters from 12 to 16 April 1993, adopted the modalities for participation in and contribution to the World Summit

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for Social Development and its preparatory process of non-governmental organizations, as follows:

Participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Summit for Social Development and its preparatory process

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council that express the wish to attend the World Summit for Social Development and the meetings of its Preparatory Committee will be accredited for participation. Others wishing to be accredited may apply to the Summit secretariat for this purpose in accordance with the following requirements:

(a) The secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development will be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation, in accordance with the provisions given below, of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Summit and its preparatory process;

(b) All such applications must be accompanied by information on the competence of the organization and on its relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, indicating the particular areas of the Summit preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain, and should include, inter alia, the following:

(i) Purposes of the organization;

(ii) Information on its programmes and activities in areas relevant to the Summit and its preparatory process and on the country or countries in which those programmes and activities are carried out;

(iii) Confirmation of its activities at the national and/or the international level;

(iv) Copies of its annual reports with financial statements, and a list of members of the governing body and their country of nationality;

(v) A description of its membership, indicating the total number of members and their geographical distribution;

(c) In the evaluation of the relevance of non-governmental organizations applying for accreditation to the Summit and its preparatory process, it is agreed that the background of those organizations and their involvement in social development issues, including core issues as defined in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992, will determine such relevance;

(d) Non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation will be asked to confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the Summit;

(e) In cases where the Summit secretariat believes, on the basis of the information provided in accordance with the present document, that an organization has established its competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, it will recommend to the Preparatory Committee that the organization be accredited. In cases where the Summit secretariat does not recommend the granting of accreditation, it will make available to the Preparatory Committee its reasons for so acting. The Summit secretariat should ensure that its recommendations are available to members of the Preparatory Committee at least one week prior to the start of each session;

(f) The Preparatory Committee will decide on all proposals for accreditation within 24 hours of the Summit secretariat's recommendations having been taken up by the Preparatory Committee in plenary meeting. Should a decision not be taken within that period, interim accreditation will be accorded until such time as a decision is taken;

(g) A non-governmental organization that has been granted accreditation to attend one session of the Preparatory Committee may attend all future sessions, as well as the Summit itself;

(h) In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the World Summit for Social Development, non-governmental organizations will have no negotiating role in the work of the Summit and its preparatory process;

(i) Relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may be given an opportunity to briefly address the Preparatory Committee in plenary meeting and its subsidiary bodies. Other relevant non-governmental organizations may also ask to speak briefly at such meetings. If the number of requests is too large, the Preparatory Committee will request that the non-governmental organizations form themselves into constituencies, with each constituency speaking through one spokesperson. Any oral intervention by a non-governmental organization should, in accordance with normal United Nations practice, be made at the discretion of the Chairman and with the consent of the Preparatory Committee;

(j) Relevant non-governmental organizations may, at their own expense, make written presentations in the official languages of the United Nations during the preparatory process, as they deem appropriate. Those written presentations will not be issued as official documents unless they are in accordance with the United Nations rules of procedure.

United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (Turkey, 1996)

4. The General Assembly, by its resolution 47/180, decided to convene the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) from 3 to 14 June 1996, and to establish a Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly for the Conference. In the same resolution, the Assembly invited non-governmental organizations, particularly those from developing countries and including those related to major groups, to participate in and contribute to the Conference and its preparatory process and, to that end, decided that the

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Preparatory Committee should formulate and adopt modalities for the accreditation and participation of those organizations, taking into account the procedures followed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The Preparatory Committee, at its organizational session, held at Headquarters from 3 to 5 March 1993, decided that the participation of non-governmental organizations should be governed by the procedures set out below.

Rules of procedure for the participation of non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council that express their wish to attend the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the meetings of its Preparatory Committee shall be accredited for participation. Others wishing to be accredited may apply to the Conference secretariat for this purpose in accordance with this decision.

The secretariat of the Conference shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process.

All such applications must be accompanied by information on the organization's competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, indicating the particular areas of the Conference preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain, and which should include, inter alia, the following information:

(a) The purpose of the organization, and the country or countries in which it is active;

(b) The date of establishment and location of the principal office of the organization and confirmation of its activities at the national and/or international level;

(c) Information as to the programmes and activities of the organization in areas relevant to the Conference and its preparatory process, and the country or countries in which they are carried out;

(d) Copies of its annual reports with financial statements and a list of members of the governing body and their country of nationality;

(e) A description of its membership, indicating the total number of members and their geographical distribution.

In the evaluation of the relevance of non-governmental applications for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process, it is agreed that their background and involvement in human settlement issues will determine their relevance.

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Non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation shall be asked to confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the Conference.

In cases where the Conference secretariat believes, on the basis of the information provided in accordance with this decision, that the organization has established its competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, it will recommend to the Preparatory Committee that the organization be accredited. In cases where the Conference secretariat does not recommend the granting of accreditation, it will make available to the Preparatory Committee the reasons for not doing so. The Conference secretariat should ensure that its recommendations are available to the Preparatory Committee at least one week prior to the start of the session.

The Preparatory Committee will decide on all cases and proposals for accreditation within 24 hours of the Conference secretariat's recommendations having been taken up by the Preparatory Committee in plenary meeting. In the event of a decision not having been taken within this period, interim accreditations shall be accorded until such time as a decision is taken.

A non-governmental organization that has been granted accreditation to attend a session of the Preparatory Committee may attend all its future sessions.

In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the Conference, non-governmental organizations shall have no negotiating role in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process.

Relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may be given an opportunity to address the Preparatory Committee briefly in plenary meeting and in its subsidiary bodies. Other relevant non-governmental organizations may also ask to speak briefly at such meetings. If the number of requests is too large, the Preparatory Committee shall request the non-governmental organizations to form themselves into constituencies, each constituency to speak through one spokesperson. Any oral intervention by a non-governmental organization should, in accordance with normal United Nations practice, be at the discretion of the Chairman and with the consent of the Preparatory Committee.

Relevant non-governmental organizations may, at their own expense, make written presentations during the preparatory process in the official languages of the United Nations as they deem appropriate. Those written presentations will not be issued as official documents except in accordance with United Nations rules of procedure.

World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Yokohama, Japan, 1994)

5. The General Assembly, by its resolution 48/188, decided to convene the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994 and that the Conference would be held at Yokohama, Japan from 23 to 27 May. The Assembly requested the

Secretary-General to invite to the Conference all States, national committees for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as the intergovernmental organizations and scientific associations concerned, relevant non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

6. The Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, at its session held at Geneva from 14 to 18 March 1994, decided to adopt the procedures for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Conference and its preparatory process set out below.

Participation of non-governmental organizations in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council which express their wish to attend the Conference and its Preparatory Committee meetings shall be accredited for participation. Others wishing to be accredited may apply to the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction for this purpose.

The secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process.

All such applications must be accompanied by information on the organization's competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, indicating the particular areas of the Conference preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain.

In cases where the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction believes, on the basis of the information provided, that the organization has established its competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, it will recommend to the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee that the organization be accredited. The list to be presented to the Bureau will be circulated to all Member States for information and appropriate action.

The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee will decide on all proposals for accreditation. The list of the accredited non-governmental organizations will be circulated to all Member States.

In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, non-governmental organizations shall have no negotiating role in the work of the Conference and its preparatory process.

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Summary

7. It appears that the following pattern for the participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations conferences is emerging:

(a) Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which have signified their wish to participate in a specific conference and its preparatory process, shall be accredited for participation;

(b) Other non-governmental organizations wishing to be accredited may apply to the Secretariat. They are requested to submit, together with their application, a certain number of supporting documents in order to enable the Secretariat to evaluate the relevance of organizations to the work of the Conference. When the Secretariat believes that the organization has established its competence and relevance, it recommends to the preparatory body that the organization be accredited.

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Annex II

RELATIONS BETWEEN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS*

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

1. UNCTAD's formal relations with NGOs are governed by article XV, rule 77 of the Rules of Procedure of the Trade and Development Board (TDB), as well as decision 43 (VII) of the TDB. Rule 77 states that NGOs concerned with matters of trade and trade as related to development may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Board, its sessional committees and subsidiary organs. Furthermore, upon the invitation of the Chair and subject to the approval of the Board, NGOs may make oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities.

2. UNCTAD recognizes three categories of NGOs with official status: (a) international NGOs that engage in activities related to a majority of UNCTAD's institutional concerns; (b) international NGOs that have special competence in one or two areas of UNCTAD involvement; and (c) national NGOs with a well-established reputation which are considered to have a special contribution to make to UNCTAD work. Paragraph 84 of the Cartagena Commitment places particular emphasis on closer cooperation between UNCTAD and NGOs and, depending on the issue, can invite these actors to participate in an advisory capacity both at public meetings of the board and standing and special committees, as well as in the ad hoc working groups.

3. A wide range of NGOs have consultative status with UNCTAD. Most are specialized non-governmental bodies in specific sectors such as trade, transport, banking and insurance. Formal responsibility for UNCTAD-NGO cooperation resides with UNCTAD's External Relations, Communications and Publications Service (ERCPS).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

4. UNDP Governing Council decision 86/15, enabled UNDP Regional Bureaux and Field Offices to implement community-based initiatives and adopt grass-roots approaches to development with the assistance of the newly established NGO programme. UNDP cooperation with NGOs has since expanded through programmes that: (a) support participatory, community-based development; (b) promote dialogue and collaboration between NGOs, Governments and multilateral agencies; (c) encourage and support NGOs involvement in sustainable development activities; and (d) strengthen the capacity, impact and sustainability of NGOs and other grass-roots groups.

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* This annex is based on materials prepared for a handbook for NGOs on United Nations system-NGO collaboration (to be published by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service in 1994).

5. The activities that UNDP supports involve principally, but not exclusively, groups and networks that operate on the local, national and regional level. They build upon, and draw upon, both the implementing capacity of such organizations and their resources to engage local communities in sustainable human development efforts through information, education, networking and advocacy. One of the main objectives of UNDP is to encourage greater NGO participation in the design and implementation of country programmes. This objective is linked to UNDP's overall mandate to promote sustainable human development.

6. NGOs are usually subcontracted to implement projects and programmes, but UNDP funds are available that aim to strengthen NGO capacity and/or finance their activities. These funds come in the form of small-grants programmes or joint government-NGO collaborative efforts.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme

7. A component of UNDP's vision of sustainable human development is collaboration with UNV. UNV relies on the major volunteer-sending agencies (international development NGOs) of the North to promote its programmes and recruitment. In concurrence with UNDP, UNV seeks to promote human development through local actors in a participatory manner. UNDP supports UNV initiatives in the areas of urban poverty, natural resource management, income-generation and utilisation of indigenous knowledge.

United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

8. In line with the directives on NGOs and grass-roots development set forth by UNDP, UNCDF collaborates with NGOs with the aim of supporting self-reliant initiatives. Most NGOs cooperate with UNCDF by providing technical assistance through subcontracting arrangements. However, this depends on local contexts and NGO expertise, and emphases range from infrastructural growth to micro-projects designed to generate additional household income.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

9. From its inception, UNIFEM has worked closely with NGOs at the local, regional and international levels. Acting as a broker, UNIFEM supports their increased access and participation in the official workings of the United Nations. The Fund works through NGOs to achieve its overall goal of incorporating and empowering women in the development process. UNIFEM also supports NGOs to improve their organizational capacity to enter into meaningful partnerships without sacrificing egalitarian values.

10. A consortium of 22 international NGOs represented in New York form the Non-Governmental Committee of Organizations in Consultative Status with UNIFEM. The NGO Committee on UNIFEM raises public awareness, promotes gender-sensitive policy and develops projects for the advancement of women in collaboration with UNIFEM.

11. UNIFEM does not have a set mechanism for in-house coordination and cooperation with NGOs because it works with NGOs at different levels and in many

different capacities. Under the overall supervision of the Director, the Communications and External Relations Section handles NGO fundraising and outreach with the view to promoting collaboration.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

12. UNICEF's formal relations with NGOs stem from Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, which recognises the importance of advisory and consultative relations with appropriate international and national NGOs to the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Upon request, UNICEF grants consultative status to international NGOs that already hold consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and wish to formalise their relationship with UNICEF.

13. UNICEF works with NGOs in ways that reflect its own operating structure. It gives priority to collaborating and consulting NGOs that meet the goals of the World Summit for Children and has ties with local and national affiliates of international NGOs and international NGOs themselves in meeting these objectives.

14. NGOs with consultative status are represented at UNICEF Executive Board meetings and Programme Committee sessions and may circulate statements or, if permitted by the Chairperson of the Executive Board, make oral statements to the Board on relevent topics. NGOs not formally linked to UNICEF may be placed on a correspondent list and regularly receive information on UNICEF priorities and joint UNICEF-NGO activities.

15. NGOs may influence UNICEF priorities through the NGO Committee on UNICEF. This body, based in New York, is comprised of international NGOs holding consultative status with UNICEF and develops its activities through specialized working groups, consultations and regional and international meetings. With financial support from UNICEF, the NGO Committee and its working groups seek to initiate action-oriented discussions on problems affecting children and their families. In addition, the UNICEF NGO Liaison Unit is located in the Division of Public Affairs (DPA) at United Nations Headquarters, New York. It is responsible for overall coordination and planning in all areas of UNICEF-NGO cooperation. The Units' counterpart in Geneva works closely and acts as a channel of information to expand advocacy networks in support of UNICEF's global priorities.

16. Collaboration between NGOs and UNICEF, while reflecting UNICEF's operational structure, is mutually beneficial. NGOs can, and have, provided funding assistance to UNICEF. For example, in 1990, NGOs gave US$ 213 million of total UNICEF income. NGO assistance has helped UNICEF provide food, supplies and medicine vital to emergency operations and has been a key element in the rebuilding of community services and structures in situations of emergency or conflict.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

17. The cornerstone of UNEP's relations with NGOs is General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) and rule 69 of UNEP's rules of procedure. In resolution

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2997 (XXVII), which established UNEP, the General Assembly invited non-governmental organizations that have an interest in the field of the environment to lend their full support and collaboration to the United Nations with a view to achieving the largest possible degree of cooperation.

18. Rule 69 of UNEP's rules of procedure, following the lead of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) states that international NGOs having an interest in the field of the environment may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organisations, if any. Furthermore, international NGOs, upon the invitation and subject to the approval of the Governing Council, may make oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities.

19. UNEP cooperation with NGOs is twofold: (a) supporting the establishment of international and regional networks and (b) drawing upon relevant individual NGOs in all regions in planning and implementing programmes and projects. The joint-collaborative efforts have led to regional programmes, designed and executed by NGOs having a particular competence in the preservation of the environment.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

20. Given its nature, UNHCR has accorded high priority to its relations with NGOs. The latter are crucial to the effective discharge of UNHCR's mandate and in the implementation of its assistance programmes.

21. The statute of UNHCR, annexed to General Assembly resolution 428 (V), specifies in paragraph 1 that UNHCR can, subject to government approval, assist private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees or their assimilation within new national communities.

22. The criteria for selection of an NGO partner by UNHCR are contained in a document entitled "UNHCR/NGO Partnership". An NGO must fulfil at least three basic conditions to establish formal relations, it must: (a) be legally registered at the locations of its headquarters and/or in the country of its operations; (b) must have the authority to operate a bank account and the ability to maintain separate accounts for any expenditures incurred on behalf of UNHCR; and (c) demonstrate financial reliability by producing official audit statements.

23. The rules of procedure for the United Nations High Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Refugees, especially rules 9, 10 and 11, form the legal basis for NGO participation in UNHCR meetings. Consultative relations allow NGOs to participate as observers in UNHCR Executive Committee sessions. A week before each annual session of the UNHCR Executive Committee meeting, a consultation is held with NGOs to air concerns. In addition, around 25 information meetings involving NGOs are held in Geneva every year on individual topics such as food aid, protection or specific country situations.

24. Since each refugee situation is unique, UNHCR has a flexible approach to working with NGOs. Therefore, consultation is not limited only to NGOs with

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status, but to any organization that is apolitical and has humanitarian and social goals in its mandate. In the field, NGOs work with UNHCR as "implementing partners" by providing assistance to refugees under agreements signed with UNHCR branch offices. In operational programmes, UNHCR collaborates with only one partner, but in areas of training, advocacy or information sharing, it is more likely to work with networks of NGOs.

World Food Programme (WFP)

25. The growing involvement of NGOs in WFP's mandate, especially in relief operations, led to the creation of an NGO Liaison Unit at WFP headquarters. At present, any NGO with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or FAO automatically has status with WFP.

26. WFP field offices interact and cooperate with international and local NGOs on a diverse range of activities, including project identification, formulation and implementation and monitoring and evaluation. WFP directors of operations in country offices are permitted to initiate small-scale development activities and emergency responses through NGOs.

27. NGOs, local and international, seeking to collaborate in WFP operations must receive the consent of the host Government and furnish details with regard to proposed activities, objectives, and expected outputs.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

28. UNFPA gives precedence to creating and increasing public awareness of population questions and to promoting community involvement in population-related activities. These objectives are facilitated through joint conferences, workshops or special events on population issues.

29. UNFPA broadly follows the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council regarding consultations with NGOs. The organization must be representative of a substantial proportion, and express the views of major sections of the population or of the persons organised within the particular field of competence of UNFPA, covering where possible, a substantial number of countries in different regions of the world.

30. Based on the 1986 Revised Policy Guidelines for Assistance to NGOs, status is determined on the basis on certain criteria, including: (a) the legal authority under which the organization operates; (b) qualifications of members of the organization's governing bodies and executives; lists of constituents; and (c) banking references and audited balance sheets and accounts for the latest fiscal year. NGOs that have sustained interest in population-related activities are preferred, but UNFPA's long-term policy is to encourage NGOs to include population components in their own programmes.

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United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

31. To reduce the demand for illicit drugs, UNDCP has pursued preventive and rehabilitative programmes in collaboration with NGOs. In order to benefit from NGO experience in this area, UNDCP is at present organizing a World Forum on the Role of NGOs in Drug Demand Reduction, scheduled for 1994. The Forum is intended to build upon existing participation of NGOs in demand reduction and an attempt to broaden awareness of drug issues beyond specialized organizations.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

32. UNITAR's mandate to maintain peace and security and promote economic and social development allows the Institute to cooperate with all governmental and non-governmental, public and private institutions that can contribute to fulfilling this mandate.

33. Cooperation between UNITAR and NGOs is in the field of mutual interests with shared responsibilities. If an NGO suggests a new training programme and it is funded through a contribution to the special purpose grant for exclusive use by the specific programme, it will be launched as soon as possible.

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

34. INSTRAW is in constant contact with NGOs from the grass-roots level upward, providing advisory services, support and information, as well as participating in their activities. The expertise of NGOs on specific issues is used by INSTRAW to help expand the Institute's outreach programmes. The close link between INSTRAW and Women in Development (WID) has strengthened an informed constituency united in its advocacy for women in development issues, and facilitating understanding of NGO perspectives and liaison work.

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

35. With resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977, the General Assembly recommended that at the global and regional levels, cooperation should be sought from universities, research and scientific institutes, NGOs and voluntary groups, in order to make full use of their knowledge and experience in the field of human settlements. Habitat's Global Strategy for Shelter provides a framework for greater NGO involvement in the shelter sector. NGOs and Habitat collaborate on a range of issues, from organizing meetings to preparing for certain conferences. Habitat technical cooperation activities increasingly involve NGOs at the formulation and implementation stages, but NGOs usually deal with the execution of specific components of larger projects.

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Annex III

RELATIONS BETWEEN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

1. FAO's Basic Texts provide for the establishment of formal arrangements for consultation and cooperation with non-United Nations system intergovernmental organizations and with international NGOs active in areas which fall under the Organization's mandate.

2. The NGOs with whom FAO collaborates are in several main, and sometimes overlapping, categories: (a) rural peoples' organizations; (b) development-oriented organizations; (c) relief and humanitarian assistance organizations; (d) advocacy NGOs, which focus on specific issues of relevance to FAO's work; (e) international producers' associations and agricultural trade unions; (f) professional and academic associations; and (g) associations representing agriculture and food-related industries. For many of these categories, where organizations are not members of an international NGO, networks exist to link local and national chapters or organizations in a regional or international mechanism.

3. Three kinds of formal relations exist - consultative status, special consultative status and liaison status - entitling the organizations concerned to be invited to attend various types of meetings, receive certain types of documentation and to submit written statements on programme-related matters. On a day-to-day level, technical units throughout FAO, at headquarters and country and regional offices, have built up relations with NGOs, benefiting from their fields of competence. In recognition of the important contribution that NGOs can make to agricultural development, FAO identified NGOs as a priority area in its 1992-1993 programme of work and budget and its medium-term plan.

4. The FAO Office for External Relations (OER) serves as the focal point for FAO's work with NGOs. OER promotes policy dialogue and innovative programmes of FAO-NGO cooperation and capacity-building exercises whose experience can subsequently be incorporated into FAO's mainstream technical cooperation activities. NGOs are also invited to participate in FAO studies, workshops and conferences to articulate concerns in country programmes and their involvement in FAO field projects.

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[*] This annex is based on materials prepared for a handbook for NGOs on United Nations system-NGO collaboration (to be published by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service in 1994).

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International Labour Organization (ILO)

5. The key areas of interaction between NGOs and ILO include training in self-employment and income-generation; vocational rehabilitation; women in development; community-based, labour-intensive infrastructural development; and cooperatives. Collaboration with NGOs seeks to strengthen the aforementioned to enable them to contribute effectively to the development process.

6. The statutory provisions allowing NGOs to collaborate with ILO can be found in the ILO Constitution and the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference. Article 12 (para. 3) of the Constitution authorizes ILO, through the Governing Body, to make suitable arrangements for such consultation as it may think desirable with recognized international non-governmental organizations. In addition, Article 2 (paragraph 3) of the Standing Orders of the Conference enable representatives from international NGOs, in status with ILO, to be represented at the Conference and other meetings.

7. ILO maintains working relations with NGOs in five broad categories:
(a) international NGOs which have been granted consultative status;
(b) international NGOs that have been granted regional status (operating effectively in that region of ILO operations); (c) employers' and workers' international organizations other than those in status; (d) NGOs admitted to ILO's special list of international NGOs (demonstrating evident interest in at least one area of the work of ILO); and (e) NGOs that do not fall into any of the above categories, but which apply for an invitation to ILO meetings because of interest in an item on the agenda.

8. ILO collaborative efforts are based on their partner NGOs' knowledge of local conditions and demonstrated technical ability. Collaboration usually comes in the form of subcontracting NGOs to undertake specific tasks (surveys, studies, training) based on that NGOs' comparative advantage. This ensures that the NGO will effectively deliver project inputs and meet necessary standards of capability and accountability.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

9. Article XI, paragraph 4 of the UNESCO Constitution defines the basis for cooperation between UNESCO and NGOs as follows: UNESCO may make suitable arrangements for consultation and cooperation with international non-governmental organizations concerned with matters within its competence and may invite them to undertake specific tasks. Such cooperation may also include appropriate participation by representatives of such organizations on advisory committees set up by the General Conference.

10. UNESCO's relations with NGOs, to this day, are governed by directives adopted at UNESCO's XIV Session in 1966. As a result, the executive board of UNESCO recognises three categories of international NGOs with which it has official relations: category A, consultative and associate relations; category B, information and consultative relations; and category C, mutual information relations.

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11. International NGOs in consultative and associate relations (category A), although few in number, have the closest collaborative ties with UNESCO. They are pivotal in the planning and executing stages of UNESCO activities and are consulted frequently by UNESCO staff at headquarters and in the field. The benefit for international NGOs in category A, in addition to attending meetings and conferences, is an opportunity to influence the decision-making process.

12. Organizations belonging to category B are entitled to advise UNESCO through provision of relevant reports and to assist in the implementation of UNESCO activities. UNESCO also gives them the right to participate in the UNESCO General Conference, regularly receive appropriate documentation and to attend special meetings as observers.

13. Category C, mutual information relations, allows international NGOs to liaise with UNESCO information and communication networks and to be contracted as implementing agents of UNESCO projects. Depending on the performance of the international NGOs with regard to their status, category C organizations may join category B upon approval by the UNESCO Executive Board.

14. NGO eligibility for official collaboration with UNESCO is restricted to those of an international nature and sufficient institutional capacity to manage responsibilities. Although UNESCO does not have formal relations with national NGOs, it does come into contact with these organizations through collaboration with their international branches.

15. The Division of International NGOs and Foundations of UNESCO coordinates all activities relating to NGO-UNESCO cooperation and collaboration. It is responsible for overseeing, monitoring and managing UNESCO's financial relations with NGOs. With regard to the latter, NGOs, when collaborating with UNESCO, are: (i) given grants to support NGO activities contributing to UNESCO goals; (ii) subcontracted to execute part of UNESCO's biennial programme of work; or (iii) collaborate with member States assisted by UNESCO to undertake projects that comply with UNESCO objectives.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

16. Being a relatively new specialized agency, the constitution of UNIDO, effective from 1986, provides for a wider basis of collaboration with NGOs through Guidelines for the Relationship of UNIDO with NGOs. Articles 2 and 19 of that constitution encourages UNIDO to associate with organizations that promote and assist industrialization in developing countries. NGOs provide UNIDO with expertise and industrial information and engage in joint capacity-building exercises in the hope of an overall positive impact on projects in developing countries. UNIDO's policy organs (the Industrial Development Board and the General Conference) invite NGOs in status to their meetings to discuss cooperative efforts between these organizations and UNIDO. NGOs that are interested in working more closely with UNIDO have entered into agreements with UNIDO to concentrate on human resource development, promotion of technology transfer, regional and subregional cooperation and ecologically sustainable industrial development.

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World Bank

17. Although the World Bank does not have any formal mechanisms for NGOs to attain consultative status, the organization does have clear operational rules for collaboration with NGOs. Operational Directive 14.70, issued in 1989, sets out a framework to involve NGOs in Bank-supported activities. It defines NGOs as being largely independent of Government and characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative rather than commercial objectives.

18. NGOs work on the project level usually in a tripartite arrangement along with Bank staff and the host Government. NGOs can/may assist the Bank in: (a) analysis of development issues; (b) project identification and design; (c) project financing; (d) implementation; and (e) monitoring and evaluation. The participation of NGOs is seen as being favourable in view of the positive impact NGOs have had in development, particularly in the areas of poverty and environmental degradation.

World Health Organization (WHO)

19. The foundation for collaboration between NGOs and WHO was laid by member States at the first World Health Assembly in 1948 in the form of a statement of principles which was to act as a guide for WHO's relations with NGOs. Article 71 of the WHO Constitution states that WHO may make suitable arrangements for consultation and cooperation with NGOs in WHO's field of operations. Amended at the 1987 World Health Assembly, the Principles Governing Relations between WHO and NGOs specified areas of collaboration, a framework for national, regional and international cooperation and a procedure for admitting NGOs into official relations status with WHO.

20. The Executive Board of WHO will permit NGOs to enter into official relations on the basis of the following: (a) completion of a two-year period of working relations with WHO that was initiated through an exchange of letters specifying joint activities for collaboration; (b) conformity with the spirit and principles of the Constitution of WHO; and (c) concentration on development work in health or health-related fields.

21. Upon receiving official relations status, the NGO is reviewed every three years by the Executive Board to determine whether that status will be maintained. Normally, NGOs in status with WHO may send representatives to WHO meetings or conferences with the possibility of making statements, having access to documentation and the opportunity to submit memoranda for circulation.

22. NGOs assist WHO in specific areas of interest to promote the overall goals of WHO. For example, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) collaborates with WHO in protecting the destruction of medicinal plants. Other NGOs may translate materials into local languages for use in national health education programmes. Furthermore, WHO has facilitated the establishment of councils with representatives of health authorities and NGOs to promote dialogue and cooperation among the governmental and non-governmental sector.

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International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

23. The framework and guidelines for IFAD-NGO cooperation have evolved, based on decisions taken by IFAD's governing bodies. IFAD's relations with NGOs stem from article 8, section 2 of the Agreement Establishing the Fund, whereby the Fund shall (a) cooperate closely with FAO and other organizations of the United Nations system and (b) cooperate closely with NGOs concerned with agricultural development.

24. IFAD does not give formal or consultative status to NGOs. However, NGOs may participate as observers in the IFAD Governing Council meetings. As a result of the latter, the IFAD Governing Council approved, in 1989, the establishment of an annual IFAD-NGO consultation to discuss past, ongoing and future prospects of IFAD-NGO collaboration.

25. Operational cooperation at the project level is governed by legal contracts. In most cases, NGOs are contracted to the project loans extended to the beneficiary Government. In that capacity NGOs have: (a) implemented specific components of IFAD projects; (b) served as consultants in project identification and formulation; and (c) undertaken socio-economic surveys in areas where IFAD projects are planned.

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Annex IV

PRIVATE GRANTS BY DAC-COUNTRY NGOs

involved in development cooperation

	MILLION U.S. DOLLARS				PERCENT OF ODA			
	1970	1980	1985	1992	1970	1980	1985	1992
AUSTRALIA	15.70	39.75	52.09	63.06	7.42	5.96	6.96	6.21
AUSTRIA	3.55	23.46	18.46	78.94	33.46	13.19	7.43	14.19
BELGIUM	14.80	45.00	22.72	30.23	12.37	7.56	5.16	3.50
CANADA	51.60	102.00	171.00B	270.00	15.32	9.49	10.48B	10.73
DENMARK	3.00	12.87	15.57	28.00	5.07	2.68	3.54	2.01
FINLAND	0.80	15.53	12.71	8.31	11.76	14.05	6.03	1.29
FRANCE	6.30	35.70B	64.77	302.25	0.86	1.24B	2.07	3.65
GERMANY	77.77	420.71	423.78	856.03	12.98	11.80	14.40	11.29
IRELAND	-	-	22.37	27.00	-	-	56.99	39.41
ITALY	5.00	3.07	8.06	50.00	3.40	0.45	0.73	1.21
JAPAN	2.90	26.38	101.44	190.35	0.63	0.79	2.67	1.71
LUXEMBOURG	-	-	-	8.40	-	-		23.22
NETHERLANDS	5.18	78.71	97.60	260.11	2.64	4.83	8.60	9.45
NEW ZEALAND	1.40	6.78	8.23	12.31	10.22	9.38	15.19	12.67
NORWAY	3.90	33.00	51.79	130.00	10.60	6.79	9.02	10.21
PORTUGAL	-	-	-	0.67	-	-	-	0.22
SPAIN	-	-	-	70.30	-	-	-	4.63
SWEDEN	25.19	59.00	77.57	130.00	21.53	6.13	9.24	5.29
SWITZERLAND	10.91	63.21	53.92	167.90	36.16	25.02	17.82	14.74
UNITED KINGDOM	33.60	120.16	168.52	437.98	6.97	6.48	11.02	13.62
UNITED STATES	598.00	1,301.00	1,513.00	2,812.00	18.97	18.23	16.09	24.02
TOTAL	859.00	2,386.33	2,883.69	5,933.84	12.81	9.11	10.03	9.47

Source: OECD/DAC, April 1994.

Annex V

NET GRANTS FROM DAC GOVERNMENTS TO DAC-COUNTRY NGOs

INVOLVED IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

	MILLION U.S. DOLLARS				PERCENT OF ODA			
	1970	1980	1985	1992	1970	1980	1985	1992
AUSTRALIA	0.04	5.71	12.81	11.69	0.02	0.86	1.71	1.15
AUSTRIA	6.57	..	1.03	2.50	5.37	..	0.41	0.45
BELGIUM	..	38.16	27.44	1.39	..	6.42	6.23	0.16
CANADA	..	60.00B	128.60	252.32	..	5.58B	7.88	10.03
DENMARK	..	12.24	6.90	3.97	..	2.55	1.57	-
FINLAND	-	1.43	4.09	5.62	-	1.27	1.94	0.87
FRANCE	..	3.45	42.51	25.89	..	0.12	1.36	-
GERMANY	..	198.37	162.90	206.83	..	5.56	5.54	2.73
IRELAND	-	0.81	1.92	(1.20)	-	2.68	4.89	-
ITALY	..	1.50B	39.12	..	..	0.22B	3.56	-
JAPAN	..	26.89	41.31	107.22	..	0.80	1.09	0.96
LUXEMBOURG	-	-	-	0.31	-	-		-
NETHERLANDS	..	87.80	68.86	(190.00)	..	5.39	6.06	-
NEW ZEALAND	-	0.95	0.67	1.29	-	1.31	1.24	1.33
NORWAY	0.95	12.29	34.09	(85.00)	2.58	2.53	5.93	-
PORTUGAL	-	-	-	0.43	-	-	-	0.14
SPAIN	-	-	-	(2,000)	-	-	-	-
SWEDEN	8.81	49.17	32.96	137.07	7.53	5.11	3.92	-
SWITZERLAND	2.30	20.00B	40.64	142.32	8.29	7.92B	13.43	12.49
UNITED KINGDOM	..	3.45	13.23	19.18	..	0.19	0.86	0.60
UNITED STATES	..	604.70	802.77	(1,100.00)	..	8.47	8.54	..
TOTAL	12.87	1,986.89	1,461.85	(2,314.23)	0.19	4.30	5.08	3.69

Figures in brackets are provisional.
Source: OECD/DAC, Paris, April 1994.

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